

THE SMART SET

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CLEVERNESS

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The June number of THE SMART SET will contain:

"The Bonbonnière," by Ethel Watts Mumford

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Among the other contributors to the June number will be: Barry Pain, Joaquin Miller, Kate Jordan, J. J. Bell and Julia C. R. Dorr

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VERONICA'S LOVERS

By G. B. Burgin

BEFORE THE WAR

IT was the eve of old Lady Huntingtower's penurious dance; she gave one every season just to assert herself, as if she were not in the habit of doing that at all seasons. Had she been poor, she would have lavished large sums on the dance to make it a success. Being enormously wealthy, however, she relied on her antiquity to carry her through to a successful issue, and, as evidence of Norman descent, displayed the blue blood in an extremely haughty nose—a nose which was as pointed as her remarks when people failed to do their duty. She was more than difficult to please, with a morbid distaste for anything “new,” from frocks to millionaires; and even carried her prejudices so far as to forbid the growing of mushrooms on the Huntingtower estates. People who came up like mushrooms had a remarkable knack of climbing still higher, and, with a fine flow of language, she declared that they were “wolves in fungoid garb.”

Lady Huntingtower's main object in life was to get her only son, Harry, appropriately married. “Matrimonial felicity,” she was wont to observe, “is positively immoral unless you have ten thousand a year. People who presume to be happy on less, have no sense of the fitness of things; and as for the modern Paolos and Francescas who tamper with the sanctity of weddings at St. George's, Hanover square, it does not matter where they fly to, provided they only fly out of society. Society,” she would remark to sympathizing friends, with an oratorical

flourish of her ear-trumpet which nearly put their eyes out, “society pays little attention to the ten commandments; so far as society is concerned, they are an impertinence, and merely serve for moral chest-protectors to the middle classes. You have only to notice the costume in a modern ball-room to be aware that the feminine half, at least, of society, does not require chest-protectors. Now, Harry, bear this in mind. Old blood and old wine should always go together. I shall find you a fitting wife, and you will make love to her as prettily as you can. Then you can be married next Spring, and *ranger* yourself. But remember, the girl must be of my choosing. I won't have you marry any one whose ancestors did not travel with Norman William. A Huntingtower cannot wed with a Cook's tourist.”

The band was already indulging in that delightful operation of “tuning up,” which, a certain shah once declared, produces the finest music in the world, and Lady Huntingtower, who always disagreed with any statement on any subject advanced by any over-married potentate, shuddered as she drew on gloves specially contrived to hide her skinny elbows.

“Cook's tourist! No, I don't want to marry a tourist. I don't understand you,” said Huntingtower.

“I spoke in the language of metaphor.”

“Well, don't, *mater*. Life's too short to grasp what it all means.” Huntingtower pulled his fair mustache in an embarrassed way. “D'you mean to say I'm not to ask Veronica Wyld to marry me unless she can

prove that her people were chums of that wandering thief, Billy the Norman?"

Lady Huntingtower reared, metaphorically speaking, and pawed the air. "'There is a sacrilege doth hedge a king'—I mean—oh, you know what I mean, though it isn't quite right. Quotations are always so much easier to invent than to quote correctly; that's what they're for. Harry, you must speak more respectfully of a monarch who was the father of the British aristocracy."

"He was—of most of 'em; but what's that to do with Veronica Wylde, mother?"

"Everything. She's too modern—only three hundred years old."

"Why, she's just twenty-four."

"I mean her people."

"Well, I don't want to marry her people, thank goodness; they're dead; and I'm dead nuts on her."

"Dead what?" almost screamed her ladyship, suddenly growing deaf in order to conceal her annoyance. "Who's dead? Why wasn't I told?"

"I soon shall be, if you worry me so, mother." Huntingtower was visibly embarrassed. "I love Veronica awfully, and I'm going to ask her to marry me. A fellow's got to do his duty by his country, don't you know. You won't let me go to South Africa and fight, so I'd better marry, and——"

"Fight at home. If 'a fellow' can't take care of himself, 'a fellow's' mother must do it for him. I'll keep an eye on you all the evening," declared Lady Huntingtower, suddenly recovering her hearing with vigor. "To bring a girl into the family whose people are only three hundred years old is to—to lower our average and—and insult the heavenly powers. I—I'd be ashamed to look St. Peter in the face when my time came."

"St. Peter!" The young fellow was bewildered. "What has he to do with it?"

Lady Huntingtower surveyed him with fine scorn. "Are you under the impression—you, Harry—are you un-

der the impression that there will not be any social code in the next world? Do you dare to think that there will be no tables of precedence? Why, if that were so, where is one to go? Modern novels make the devil seem such a cad, one really could not tolerate him."

"S-s-s-h! Mother! You're growing theological. You must be ill." He looked at her, anxiously.

"The-o-log-i-cal! Ill!"

Old Lady Huntingtower worked at her left-hand glove with a tug which split it, jerked her head until the tiara nearly fell from her snowy hair, and sniffed audibly. When she sniffed, it meant war.

"Of course," she reluctantly admitted, "Veronica Wylde is very lovely, and all that sort of thing; but so many girls are pretty nowadays that it is much more *chic*"—she pronounced the word as though it were a young fowl—"to be aristocratically ugly."

"Is it! Well, I plump for beauty. Veronica's so beautiful, mother, she takes my breath away."

"And you'll take my life away, if you're not careful, Harry. Plump beauty, indeed! Fat is so vulgar, and plumpness very quickly degenerates into fat."

The young man sighed, and offered her his arm. "Ah, Veronica's so beautiful—so beautiful that the very wind of heaven blows more gently when she takes the air."

"Takes the fiddlesticks! I'm sure that conductor is intoxicated. Look at the way he's waggling his baton. Now, the first glove's gone, too. Comes of getting things at remainder sales. What am I to do about my gloves?"

"Come along, mother. Never mind your gloves. Jenlow's beginning to announce people. If our guests see him standing there alone, they'll think he's your brother, old Wadenham."

"How dare you speak of a belted earl as 'old Wadenham'?"

"Belted!" The young man laughed heartily. "That's good! Why, *mater*,

the only belt you could get round him would be a bronco cinch."

"Don't use any of those horrid words you picked up on the prairies of Winnipeg. Take me to the top of the stairs, and marry the girl I select for you. I tell you, I won't be argued with. The man who disobeys his mother, is sure to run away with a 'Gaiety' girl; it's a short distance nowadays from the music-hall to the baronial ditto."

The young man impatiently stuck out his arm in the correct attitude.

"Now, then, *mater*, let's sail to the head of the staircase. When I want to give you a daughter-in-law from 'the halls,' I'll let you know. Beauty and blue blood together. That's it. Never mind your glove. Your elbow's gone right through it. There's the Pontwhystle dowager whistling up the stairs, ready to feel insulted before she gets to the top."

"Ingrate! And don't dare to refer to my elbows. I'd lovely elbows when I was your age. Kings have kissed them."

"Never mind your guilty past, mother, but come along."

"Guilty past, indeed! I'll talk to you in my boudoir to-morrow. Is my train out? You'll bring my gray hair to— Ah, my dear Estelle. How good of you to come to-night! So Mary has secured the Entwistle diamonds at last! But, then, she was always so patient and persevering that of course Entwistle *had* to propose. I hear that the betting at the clubs was all in Mary's favor. Duke, my dear duke, you look younger than ever. Harry, take him away, and"—in a hurried whisper—"give him some of that old Tokay, and let him sleep in a quiet corner. It will be so awkward if he goes to sleep on the staircase, and wakes up with a yell. When he did that, last year, people thought he wanted to scalp some one."

Huntingtower dutifully led off the aged duke, and put him to sleep in a corner.

"When your father and I were young bloods together," began the duke,

with a senile chuckle, "there was a doosid pretty milliner in—" He swallowed a glass of Tokay, and "fell on sleep."

After telling a footman to keep an eye on the duke, Huntingtower hurried back to the top of the staircase, filled with rage lest his mother should have had time to say something nasty to Veronica Wylde; but, as he calmed down, he reflected that Lady Huntingtower rarely insulted people in her own house. She always, on the Arab principle, gave them twenty yards' start, and then cut their throats or stabbed their reputations—if they had any. He reached the head of the staircase just in time to hear his mother tell Mrs. Marjoribanks, Veronica Wylde's pretty young aunt, that "Harry and Edith Pontwhystle were going to make a match of it."

Veronica smiled, knowing that this was intended to be overheard. Mrs. Marjoribanks, too, was equal to the occasion.

"So sorry I can't congratulate you, my dear Lady Huntingtower. I've just heard that Edith has gone off with young O'Gorman, of the Guards."

"G-g-gone off! O'Gorman! That penniless Irishman attached to a bog!"

"Well, now, she's attached to the Irishman, with the bog thrown in. If they quarrel, he'll throw her into it. An Irish bog will swallow anything. Your son doesn't seem very sad about it."

The youthful Huntingtower came eagerly forward. "Delighted to hear it. The *mater* is always drawing the longbow. Got the habit from our Norman ancestors, and can't help it. You see, she—she's so deaf," he added, by way of extenuation. "Never made love to Edith Pontwhystle in my life. Ah, Crewe, take Mrs. Marjoribanks into the conservatory; it—it's cooler there."

He cast an imploring glance at Mrs. Marjoribanks, as Algy Crewe hesitated. Crewe wanted to make love to Veronica and her money.

Mrs. Marjoribanks, who was good nature itself, with the soul of a girl of

eighteen in the plump body of a widow of three-and-thirty, vigorously fastened on to Crewe. "Come, Algy, and let's talk about the transmigration of souls," she said, cheerfully. "It's so much pleasanter than realizing the crushing of bodies. Have you seen Professor Cheyne anywhere?"

"No, I haven't. I'd rather talk about the transmigration of bodies, and assist in the transmigration of Huntingtower," growled Algernon Crewe, seeing that there was no escape from Mrs. Marjoribanks. It made him furious that Veronica, beautiful as a dream, should be borne away in triumph by the son of the house.

"Our first dance," said Huntingtower, eagerly offering his arm to Veronica, who, dark, tall, majestic, with ebon hair and eyes of liquid light, did not seem at all overwhelmed by his attentions. Her fine eyes roved restlessly from group to group, as she filled up her programme. Huntingtower, handing it back to her, noticed that four dances, all of them waltzes, were marked with the letter "X." "It's that beggar, Graham," he groaned to himself. "Why haven't I the luck to be starting for South Africa! The absent are always right. That's why they go away. People can't quarrel with them till they come back. For two pins, I'd go and enlist."

Veronica gave him a couple of dances, but, in spite of her self-control, Huntingtower saw that she was absent and preoccupied. "Graham hasn't turned up," he said, a little ungenerously. "Expect he's saving himself for the march to Victoria Station with his company to-morrow. They say if a man lives through that, the Boers will be a mere trifle."

Veronica's solemn eyes bared his soul.

"Harry! You are the heir to a great name—a great house—great traditions—young—strong. Is it a fitting time for you to be dancing attendance on women when your country has need of you? I thought better of you. Are you going to become a—man?"

The young fellow's eyes flashed fire.

"Right! You are quite right! I've tried to make the *mater* see it in that way. She says she wouldn't mind my fighting against gentlemen; but Boers! Pah! It would be an insult to be killed by a Boer."

"I am ashamed of your narrow prejudices." The dance was over, and Veronica stood in a corner fanning herself. "A man who, like the Boers, fights for his hearth and country, is a gentleman anywhere. Ah, Algy, your dance?"

Fair-haired Algy Crewe bore her away in triumph, and Huntingtower leaned moodily against the wall until sent for by his mother, who told him to "make the running with Lady Eva Saintfôret." Veronica's words appealed to his very soul; but "he had great possessions," and a mother who idolized him. How could he go to South Africa to slay ignorant farmers?

Presently, Veronica came back.

"Algy also is a coward," she said, scornfully. "He says the major will do all the fighting that is necessary. Professor Cheyne volunteered, but did not know how to ride. He fell in the tan at the riding-school, and held to his horse's tail until his spectacles smashed. He, at least, is a man."

Huntingtower looked at her, his eyes full of boyish love and longing. "Don't say any more, please. I've borne as much as I can bear. Veronica, I love you. Will you marry me?"

"No," said Veronica. "When I marry, I shall marry a man."

Her eyes brightened, her color came and went. Following her glance, Huntingtower saw Major Graham standing in the doorway, erect, handsome, beautifully groomed. "Graham's the man," he said to himself, as Professor Cheyne, tall, gaunt, angular, with untrimmed masses of grizzled hair and beard, came up with Mrs. Marjoribanks on his arm. They were having an animated argument as to the expediency of eating ices, the professor contending that ices were self-murder, and Mrs. Marjoribanks, in her pretty, wilful way, urging that she must be iced or the professor would make too much

of her melting moments. Would he please go and dance with her enemies? She wanted to see them suffer as she had suffered.

Under cover of this badinage, Huntingtower slipped out of the ball-room, jumped into a hansom, and disappeared. Later, his mother discovered his absence, and searched for him in vain. It eased her anxious mind to discover that he had not disappeared with Veronica.

About an hour later, Huntingtower returned. He found Graham and Veronica sitting out their last dance in the conservatory, and greeted Graham cordially. The boy was a little pale under his tanned, healthy complexion.

"No time to wait for a commission, major," he said, quietly. "I sha'n't be more than a week behind you."

"What!" Veronica was surprised. "You—you haven't done anything rash?" she asked, anxiously.

"No," he said, gravely, but with a brave attempt at a smile. "I've been round to De la Zouche. He's going to make it all right for me with the Yeomanry to-morrow. We sail next week."

The major gripped his hand, warmly. "I knew it was in you, Harry. All good luck and a V.C."

"I'll have earned it, major, by the time I've broken it to the Mum." He turned to Veronica. "You haven't wished me luck."

Veronica, very pale, put both her hands in his. Graham left them to have it out.

"Have I sent you to your death, Harry?" she asked, earnestly.

He was little more than a lad, and his lip quivered for a moment.

"No," he said, quietly. "You've shown me it's a man's business to fight for his country. When I heard of those poor city chaps throwing up their berths to join the Yeomanry, I felt ashamed. You don't think I shall fight the worse for loving you, Veronica?"

"Indeed—indeed—no. God be with you till we meet again," she

said, softly. "I know you will do your duty, Harry. First, forgive me for——"

"Stinging me into doing it!" He looked her full in the face. "No, dear, I'm not going to worry you any more. I see it's hopeless. If I get a chance, I'll look after the major."

From the height of her gracious womanhood, she gazed down on the slender, resolute lad. Her eyes caught fire from his.

"May I—may I?" He faltered. Then he kissed her, and she kissed him in return.

"Now," he said, drawing a long breath, "you've set your seal upon me. I know that you don't love me—that you never can love me, but you've kissed me, and I shall go with a quiet mind. I—I'll look after Graham."

She was touched by his chivalry; but Lady Huntingtower suddenly appeared with the German ambassador, and Veronica danced as in a dream.

When the first faint light of dawn stole into Grosvenor square over the tops of the tall houses, it was Graham who took Veronica down to her carriage, while Algy Crewe followed protestingly with Mrs. Marjoribanks, in spite of the professor's eagerness to secure a final word with the pretty widow. The professor shambled along beside Mrs. Marjoribanks like a huge bear, and received the widow's cut and thrust with unflinching bravery.

Under cover of Mrs. Marjoribanks suddenly discovering that both her slippers were undone and insisting on Algy fastening one and the professor tackling the other, Graham found time for a few hurried words with Veronica.

"You were kind to Harry," he whispered. "Give me something to show that you will think of me sometimes."

Veronica drew a thin gold circlet from her finger—her dead mother's wedding-ring. Graham understood, and, hastily pressing it to his lips, slipped it on his little finger.

"Duty first," he said. "Then——?"

"Then you will come back to home and friends."

"To home and friends and—you!"

He raised her hand to his lips, and turned away in the darkness.

Mrs. Marjoribanks jumped into the brougham with a sigh of relief. "I wanted to give the major time to say good-bye," she said, softly. "Crewe is furious with me—spiteful little flaxen-haired toad. There was murder in his eye."

Veronica gratefully pressed her hand. Two out of her three lovers were going to the wars. For a moment, she almost regretted that she had been born a soldier's daughter.

II

TWO YEARS LATER

EVERY one knows that deadly dull and eminently respectable London street wherein dwell all the noted medical specialists of England. You suddenly plunge from the turmoil and traffic of crowded thoroughfares, and as suddenly encounter the passive stillness, the masterly quietude, of the Street of Death. If you go slowly down the street and look at the neat little brass plates on the doors, you will find that every other house is inhabited by a doctor of repute. Most sufferers—especially if they be wealthy ones—halt at the top of Harley street and, wondering whether they shall turn to the right or to the left, bid farewell to the world with the first steps. Few enter it with a light heart. Men and women come there to be judged, carrying with them a secret which is no secret to the doctors. Sometimes, they approach it with jaunty, indifferent steps, as if glad to hear that they must shortly lay down their burdens; sometimes, with worried, anxious faces, wanting to know how short their lives may be; sometimes, they drive up in hansoms or broughams, and knock at the doctor's door with fierce resolution; sometimes, your woman of fashion wears the mien of one who has so many social engagements that the intrusion of death is a liberty as unpardonable as it is ill-timed.

Harley street is the Street of Judgment, and in it are judged all the follies, the vices, the criminal weaknesses, the misfortunes, the wickednesses of men and women. Sometimes, it is the innocent who suffer for the guilty; but in all cases, guilty and innocent alike, Rhadamanthus pronounces sentence—a sentence from which there is no appeal.

A man or woman may enter Harley street with everything earth can give—wealth, position, love, intellect—and may leave it, half an hour later, poorer than the lusty beggar who sweeps the crossing lower down. The crossing-sweeper has years of life before him; the "patient" leaves life behind, as inexorably doomed to die as the trembling wretch who hears the black-capped judge pronounce the fatal words.

An acute observer, watching these men and women, finds food for pained reflection. Even the very cab-drivers slacken their speed, as if they, too, felt the subtle influence of the place, the uselessness of striving to hurry away from death.

On this particularly bright December afternoon—for once there was no London fog making the air yellow and thick and hard to breathe—Major the Honorable George Graham, youngerson of the Earl of Eske, just home from South Africa, was the last person in the world to worry himself about the possibility of dying. For months past he had lived with death, hobnobbed with him, met him in every corner of the veldt, on top of every kopje—encountered him without fear, as a soldier should. And so, as he strolled along on this December afternoon, admiring the complexions of his countrywomen, the beauty of the fair girls who passed him, he suddenly remembered his old school friend, Harcourt, the rapidly-rising Harley-street specialist. How surprised Harcourt would feel in the midst of his professional vocations to see an old friend! Unversed in the ways of medical men, however, Graham was not aware that every moment of a fashionable doctor's time is

occupied, and felt rather chilled and astonished that he was not at once admitted to Harcourt's presence.

A pretty maid showed him into a somberly furnished room, where he amused himself by studying the faces of the people who also were waiting. As time went on, he found out that they had all come by appointment, and that most of them dreaded the visit. Every now and again, a little bell tinkled softly, and the waiting people looked at one another, wondering who was to be the next victim. Then, a pretty girl, who wore a white cap, came in and gently murmured a name. If it happened to be a woman who was called, she rose and shook out her skirts with a nervous affectation of indifference which deceived no one. Sometimes, her eyes filled with tears. When a man was softly summoned, he got up with a rush, and went out as if anxious to know the worst. The curious thing about this waiting crowd was that no member of it returned. Every few minutes, the pretty girl came in again, gently murmuring a fresh name, and the victim disappeared.

At first, Graham took little notice of the doctor's patients. Feeling sound as a bell himself, although his wound was not quite healed, he could not sympathize with the miserable people around him. It did, however, occur to him that most of them were in good society—the term “good” is elastic as applied to some phases of society—and that Harcourt must be earning an enormous income. He was glad to make this discovery, for, personally, he had often thrashed Harcourt when a boy, and the latter's position was evidently due to the chastening effects of such thoughtful discipline.

At last, tired of observing the sad-faced people around him, Graham took up a paper, and became immersed in its contents. But the morbid tension in the air soon compelled him to put it down again. One by one, the people went away until there were only three left. The most prominent of the three, a stout man, trembled as if afflicted with palsy. When his

name was murmured, his tottering legs scarcely bore him to the door. Graham, pitiful, though intolerant of such cowardice, proffered a helping hand, and led him into the passage.

“Dashed good of you. Tha-anks!” said the fat man, quivering like a jelly. “It's trying, you know—dashed trying. Don't know when I've had such a trying time. Of course, there is no brandy-and-soda on the premises. Doctors are so—so dashed selfish.”

The pretty girl motioned him to follow her.

“Can't you see I'm talking to this gentleman,” snapped the fat man, angrily. It was evident that he clung to Graham as the last straw which bound him to earth. “Don't interrupt us.” He laid hold of the balustrade with a trembling hand. “Dashed trying,” he pitifully repeated. “And not a brandy-and-soda within half a mile.”

“I'm afraid you'll have to go,” Graham suggested. “Brace up. Have a B.-and-S. when it's all over.”

“Dashed hard,” quavered the fat man. “At my time of life, too, when I wanted to enjoy myself. Don't you think so?”

“I suppose it is,” Graham admitted, without grasping the nature of the fat man's complaint; and the pretty girl in the white cap and apron again beckoned impatiently.

Graham went back to the anteroom, and found two ladies there. From time to time, they coughed nervously or fidgeted with their umbrellas. These were the only outward indications of their consuming trouble. When their names were called together, they got up as if about to enter a drawing-room, and quietly went to their doom. Graham was left alone, confident that he would soon see his old chum again, without having to go through the ordeal of watching more agonized faces. As the pretty girl in the white cap appeared and murmured his name, he could not help contrasting his own cheerfulness with the gloom of the people who had preceded him into the hall of judgment.

The girl motioned him to enter a large, somewhat meagerly furnished room—a room which contained little to distract the attention of either owner or patient, for everything in it was drab, dingy, dull. Its dreary atmosphere annoyed Graham. “What a confounded prig you’ve become, Harty,” he almost shouted, as he entered. “This room is enough to—Why, I beg your pardon!” He stopped confusedly, for the little, dark, frenzied-eyed man seated at the table was not Harcourt.

The little dark man bowed. He had a big head, a wide mouth, and mad-looking, rolling, gray eyes. Graham noticed his delicate fingers and broad shoulders.

“I expected to find my friend, Dr. Harcourt, here.”

“Harcourt? Oh, no; he’s been called down to Sandringham,” barked the little dark man, with a fierce glance at Graham. “I’m looking after his people until to-morrow. I’m Powerscourt. You’ve heard of me, of course. Your name doesn’t seem to be on the list. Have you an appointment?”

“No”—Graham was rather amused at being taken for a patient—but I wanted to see Harcourt himself.”

“He’ll be back to-morrow. Sent round at the last moment to know whether I would take his people for him.”

The little dark man said this as if his consenting to “take” Harcourt’s people were the greatest honor he could bestow on Harcourt. Graham immediately congratulated himself that he was not one of Harcourt’s “people.” This unknown physician seemed to be somewhat of a prig.

“Sit down,” said the little dark man, hastily taking out a big, solemn-looking watch with a fat dial. “Sit down, and I’ll examine you. I can’t waste time asking questions. A case of heart. Yes, must be heart. You look like a man with heart. Of course, it’s heart. Don’t tell me it isn’t—I know better.”

Graham, intensely amused, sat down.

If this fussy idiot wanted to examine him, the joke was against the fussy idiot. In a moment, however, the doctor lost his fussiness, began to eye Graham critically, to ask certain questions. Graham wished he had explained that, with the exception of his flesh wound, there was nothing the matter with him. Now, it seemed as if he were making an ass of himself. When he decided to explain, the little doctor curtly told him to keep quiet and not argue, but to answer the questions put to him.

Graham, in spite of his iron nerve, began to feel ill at ease. The little doctor closed his mouth with the click of a steel trap. He did not look like a man who would take a joke at his own expense, especially when he opened Graham’s waistcoat, and, with great earnestness, examined his heart.

“Oh, this is too ridiculous,” thought Graham. “I’m hanged if I stand this miniature hornet buzzing round me any longer.” He glanced up at the little man, and saw that he was intensely in earnest—that he was not to be trifled with. Those angry eyes made him feel uncomfortable. Graham decided that it would be simpler to pay the doctor’s fee, and have a laugh at his expense when Harcourt came back from Sandringham.

The little dark doctor left off sounding Graham’s heart. There was even a kind of professional compassion in his curt tones. He made three or four strange movements with his hands, and Graham felt as if rushing waters were closing over him.

“That’s the worst of you military men. You take too much out of yourselves—strain yourselves to pieces. Then you come to us to patch you up, and expect to be all right again in a week or two.” His eyes were normal now; their anger faded away, and he regarded Graham with kindly compassion. “You’ve never thought of taking care of your heart? Evidently. Don’t say you have, because I know very well you haven’t.”

“Well,” Graham carelessly admitted, “if you’re campaigning, you can’t ex-

pect it to be all 'beer and skittles.' Kitchener often chucked in an extra bit of work when we thought we'd finished. Extra bits were turning up all the time."

"Just like him. Wish I had him here to tell him what I think of that little extra bit," murmured the doctor. His eyes blazed again. "I'd work him. I'd make him believe all sorts of things."

"Ah, you don't know him. He's not the sort of man to whom you can tell things. He generally does all the telling that's necessary, himself."

The little doctor towered above Graham, and his eyes flashed. "My dear sir, if Lord Kitchener were here, I'd tell him exactly what I thought of him."

"I dare say he'd be equally frank with you in return. You can never mistake his meaning."

Graham began to button his waistcoat, then felt for some loose gold, and wondered how much he was expected to pay for this somewhat dreary farce.

"You're very brave." The little doctor regarded him admiringly. "Few men could go through so great an ordeal and display such fine indifference to the result. I don't believe even I could frighten you. Perhaps you think I've been trying to do so."

"Frighten me! No, of course you couldn't."

"What on earth is the man talking about!" Graham thought, as he put down two guineas on the table.

"Don't tempt me to try, or you'll regret it—bitterly regret it, some day. Harcourt's fee is five guineas," snapped the doctor, whirling his hands like a windmill, and again Graham felt as if submerged by many waters. "Most patients have the decency to put the fee into an envelope."

"Aren't you afraid they'd substitute peppermint-drops instead? Come to think of it, it's rather like providing a velvet scabbard for the sword that runs through you. Most people like to be paid for their work. I do myself. I don't grumble about the way in which the money reaches me."

The little doctor fussily wrote out a prescription. Now that his back was turned, Graham felt able to breathe again. "Take this to the nearest chemist and have it made up at once." He looked keenly at Graham, who momentarily became confused. Something seemed to be impressed upon him against his will—something which robbed him of his vitality and against which he could make no resistance.

"Take it to the chemist! What for?"

"To have it made up, of course. Don't argue with me, sir. Take it."

"Oh, all right. What for?"

Graham, with a steady hand, picked up the sheet of paper, resolving to throw it away directly he quitted the house. "I'll make Harty disgorge the money to-morrow, the greedy beggar!" he murmured. "Catch me giving that little scrub five guineas!"

"What for?" snapped the doctor, in amazement. "What for? Well, if you don't soon have it made up, you'll be past praying for. I simply will not answer for the consequences. Don't you feel the symptoms?" Again, his hands made queer semicircular movements.

"Oh, come! This is ridiculous! Do you mean to say there is really anything the matter with me?"

"Ridiculous! Anything the matter! Of course, there's something the matter." The doctor regarded him compassionately, and yet with a certain exultation. "You're the bravest man I have ever met—even I can't frighten you. But that's because you don't know what I've done to you. Your pulse beats normally, you look utterly indifferent. Either you value your life very lightly, or you are in complete ignorance of what is really the matter with you."

"I came in—" Graham hesitated.

In the doctor's face was what appeared to be a look of genuine compassion. Then his eyes began to blaze again.

"Heart-disease," he snapped. "That's what's the matter with you. Be careful, or you may drop dead any

moment. Now, are you frightened? Get this prescription made up immediately, avoid all excitement, and live temperately."

"What!" Graham's bronzed visage showed his amazement. "Heart-disease! Nothing to frighten one in that."

"You hear what I said," snapped the little tyrant. "Haven't I spoken plainly enough? You've received your marching orders from a greater than Lord Kitchener. All I can do is to help you to delay the start for a little."

He spoke as if reluctant to condemn the handsome, stalwart specimen of humanity before him. His manner changed so frequently that he conveyed the impression of having two individualities.

Graham leisurely finished buttoning his other glove. Better leave the doctor to his mistake, and get away from the peremptory little ghoul. But, as he turned to quit the room, he felt a sudden pang in his heart, and went blue at the lips. The doctor triumphantly rushed to a side table, hastily poured out something, and made Graham swallow it.

"Ah, I was sure of it. I was afraid I had been a little abrupt. Ever had one of these attacks before?"

"No—I have never had one of these attacks before. A man always feels a bit excited going into action, you know, but I've never felt like this."

"No, of course you haven't. Well, you're fighting a losing battle, but don't get stirred up about it. That's the one thing you must not do."

"Oh, I'll humor the fierce-eyed, windmill-handed little brute," thought Graham, "and tell Harcourt all about it. He should be more careful when he gets a substitute. Still, he might be vexed if he thought I'd made such an ass of this fellow, who ought to be in an asylum. Looks as if he really wanted to make me believe I had heart-disease, confound him!"

The doctor handed him his hat, and bowed.

Graham also bowed.

"Thanks for your advice. It surprised me a little."

"I generally surprise most people," said the little man. "Sometimes, I surprise myself. Now, remember to keep yourself quiet and avoid all emotion. Otherwise—!" He paused, significantly.

"Otherwise?"

"There will be no 'otherwise.'" His eyes lost their fiery look, and became sad again. "No 'otherwise,'" he repeated, mechanically. "Have you ever thought what that means? What it is when there is no 'otherwise'?"

"No, I haven't. Good afternoon." Graham bowed, stiffly. His manner showed how much he disliked the doctor, and the doctor's manner showed how much he disliked Graham. It was a case of mutual antipathy at first sight.

"Good afternoon."

The doctor, after watching him with a triumphant air, began to make jerky notes in a little book on the table, and Graham went down the staircase, not knowing whether to laugh or be angry at this sorry exhibition of medical incompetence.

He walked lightly down Harley street toward the West End. "After all," he thought, cheerfully, "such an experience is disagreeable, but it does a fellow good to be pulled up like that; otherwise, he might get careless and forget that he must come to an end some day. What a ridiculous little beggar! He'd eyes like a panther's in the dark. Some of these doctors must be humbugs. I—! What——!"

He suddenly went white, and leaned against a lamp-post, then crawled into a shop, and sat down to recover himself.

The shopkeeper brought him a glass of water, and Graham swallowed it at a gulp.

"I'm all right," he said. "Just a sudden faintness, that's all. Wound not quite healed up yet." And the pretty girls in the shop looked at him with worship. He was a real hero fresh from the wars.

But, as Graham went out into the bustle of Regent street, he could not

help feeling how extraordinary it was for him to have had such an attack so soon after leaving the doctor's. Then he remembered that he had forgotten to eat any luncheon, and speedily reassured himself. "That's it," he said. "I'll write to Harcourt and give him beans. There was something odd about that fellow's eye. I'll let Harty know that, unless he speedily returns to town and looks after his patients properly, there'll be some serious mistakes made. That man will end in a mad-house."

He reached his club, but felt too lazy to write. "I'll tell Veronica all about it at dinner, and ask her advice," he murmured, soothing his irritated nerves with a cigar. "She knows by this time, that poor lad, Huntingtower, died of enteric. Very likely Crewe will be dining with her and Mrs. Marjoribanks to-night. Better go and look him up on my way to Grosvenor square."

III

IN THE ALBANY

ALGY CREWE was irritable. Something seemed to upset him. By that natural but unwritten law which guides most men and all women, he speedily arrived at the conclusion that it was his mission to upset some one else—some one who could not resent his unpleasantness. The nearest person to be made uncomfortable was his man, Wayne. Beyond an occasional wriggle, Wayne could not help himself, but bore torture with all the stoicism of a Red Indian. Actuated by this pleasing impulse, from time to time, Crewe suspended his dressing in order to give Wayne as much suffering as possible.

Wayne, a thin, active little lightweight, his smooth-shaven lips compressed with vexation, was not pleasant to look at. He had the appearance of a man who would cheerfully have poisoned his master, had such a thing been possible without risking his own neck to do it. Crewe treated him like a

dog, although Wayne knew all his secrets. The mere fact that Wayne knew enough to damage Crewe with his guardian—Crewe always called the major "Uncle," although he was no relation at all—only made Crewe more reckless. He seemed to think Wayne a kind of human cockchafer, who not only ought to consider it an honor to be twirled on a pin, but who ought to provide the necessary pin. Wayne, although clenching his teeth with suppressed fury, outwardly acquiesced in this view; it was only another item in the long account which he had against his master, an account for which he meant to secure a receipt in full some day—a receipt of his own fashioning. How he was to do it, he did not quite know; but he had a vague idea that Crewe required only a little more rope in order ultimately to secure a longer one at the hands of the common executioner. And so he suffered in silence while handing Crewe his things.

As he dressed, Crewe continued his savage valet-baiting. He had hoped that, like Harry Huntingtower, Graham would not return from South Africa, and his opinion of Boer marksmanship had suffered a severe shock. Surely Graham was big enough for even a Boer to hit from behind a kopje! It seemed to him that he ought to have taken service with the Boers and have trusted to providence to throw Graham in his path. Then he could have "potted" his guardian, thus clearing the way with Veronica Wylde. He could not get over the sneaking consciousness that Veronica admired Graham, in spite of his being ten years older than herself. Also Veronica—she had a habit of speaking her mind with biting scorn when she considered it necessary—frequently expressed her opinion about young men who did not "Ear their country's call," as one of Mr. Kipling's heroes puts it. In vain, Crewe, with thinly-veiled reluctance, declared Graham to be a professional butcher whose duty it was to cut the throats of his country's enemies.

"Then, why don't you go and help

him?" Veronica had retorted, with a sudden and unscrupulous change of front. "You've nothing to do."

"But it takes me so long doing it," Crewe lazily replied. "Besides, I never was good at cutting up things."

"I believe you are a coward," Veronica suggested, for the second time, with a fierce look in her beautiful dark eyes. "It nearly makes me die of shame to believe that your guardian's ward could be so base."

"It's so much more comfortable not to believe unpleasant things," suggested Crewe.

"Then you don't deny it?" she flashed.

"My dear Veronica, the time will come, as they say in transpontine drama, when I hope to prove to you that you are mistaken. I—I'm delicate. You know all my mother's people have heart disease sooner or later. Sometimes, it's sooner."

"The time may come when fresh men will be needed, but you won't come with it."

There was a good deal of unconscious bitterness in Veronica's tone. She had known Cousin Crewe since childhood, but it was new to her to understand that he was a coward. It would have been newer still for her to realize that he needed nothing but opportunity to become a villain. In discussing the matter with his inner consciousness, Crewe always maintained that what was villainy in a man with ten thousand a year became comparative rectitude in one with only five hundred.

Crewe did not look at all like the ordinary conventional villain, for he was a dapper, fair-haired, well-shaped man of about eight-and-twenty, with a pleasant, vacuous face and an eye-glass which afforded him his most arduous occupation in life—that of maintaining it in his right eye. As a matter of fact, he could see better without it, but he did not like the world to make the discovery. He was mean in his friendships, mean in his pleasures, mean in his loves and hates—and he had more hates than loves.

Sometimes Crewe afflicted Veronica with a sense of intolerable shame. This was when he implied that he loved her, that he wanted to marry her. When she could not sleep, she peered through the darkness, reconstructed Crewe, wondering what particular kind of evil lurked behind the framework of his innocent-looking personality. The soft, silky voice, the blond hair, neatly parted in the middle, the swinging eye-glass, the white, even teeth, full, red lips and trim little nose—a nose which suggested a sparrowhawk's bill—filled her with indefinable alarm. She felt that the evil which dwelt in Crewe was the baser because of its being so carefully hidden. She wanted to tear aside the mask, be sure that he was all she imagined him to be, rather than feel that he had never given her any excuse for doubting him.

Of course, the world regarded him as a good-natured ass, dependent upon his guardian's bounty for a livelihood. There was no necessity for Graham to maintain Crewe in idleness, except that the latter was one of those ineffectual people who have never learned to work. Veronica felt sure that Crewe wanted her money; that he wanted Graham's money; that he would stick at nothing, should the opportunity arise, to get money. He was naturally indolent, and desired to live comfortably at the world's expense. Five hundred a year was better than nothing, but it did not come up to his ideas of comfort. From his own point of view, the world had not treated him fairly. Graham had plenty of money; Veronica did not know what to do with hers, she had so much; and yet he, Crewe, was dependent on Graham's generosity for a paltry five hundred a year in addition to the hundred a year which Graham administered for him. His allowance of five hundred was purely gratuitous and optional on Graham's part. If Graham were to quarrel with him, or to marry, away would go the allowance. Crewe would be reduced to addressing envelopes at sixpence a thousand for a livelihood and living in a common "doss house."

From what he had seen of doss houses, he did not like them. There was a crudeness about them which filled him with dismay. Their frequenters, too, lacked the culture of the clubs, and were strangers to the outward application of soap and water.

At last, Crewe left off bullying Wayne, in order to read for the tenth time the telegram which lay on his dressing-table:

Back again late last night. Look you up before dinner. Dining with Veronica.

GRAHAM.

So Graham had come back, and his first visit was to Veronica. Here was another injustice to Crewe. Now that enteric had settled Huntingtower's pretensions forever, he had meant to propose to Veronica that very night; and then entered this South African butcher, redolent of blood and tawdry khaki, to spoil sport and pose as a hero. No wonder Wayne had an uncomfortable quarter of an hour.

It was only after Wayne had turned upon him with teeth showing like a wildcat's, that Crewe began to feel better. Wayne had just put him into his overcoat, and was pulling down the collar at the back. The tension of his lithe, little frame, as he hovered behind Crewe, the nervous twitching of his long, lean fingers, showed how dangerous he was. Wayne was a man of few ideas. It took years to get a new one into him. When he did assimilate it, the idea stayed, became a part of him, his only rule of conduct. A long course of Crewe's gratuitous bullying had gradually forced the conviction upon Wayne that Crewe was his enemy. He hated him. Crewe, on his part, although a coward, took a delight in provoking Wayne's hatred, well knowing how helpless the man was to resent it. Wayne made up his mind to resent it—some day. Now, he was patiently waiting for the day to come. When it did arrive, he would not make any mistakes.

Crewe finished buttoning his overcoat, and looked at himself with dissatisfaction. "You never can turn me out properly. There's a hair on my

coat. I wonder why I keep you," he snarled.

"Why, sir?"

"Yes—why?"

"I don't eat much, and I'm useful," said Wayne. "Useful—and cheap."

"Cheap! You! You'd be dear at any price. Hand me my gloves, and don't presume to answer back again. Do you call that hat brushed? Give me an umbrella that hasn't been opened. You never can roll one properly. D'you hear?"

Wayne brought the gloves, hat and umbrella in silence. Crewe, after a final look at himself in the glass, put on his hat, and turned away to go out.

"Oh, by the way," he said, picking up the telegram, carefully putting it into the envelope, and refastening it, "if Major Graham calls, say I dressed at the club, and that you haven't seen me since four o'clock this afternoon. I want to get off before he comes. You hear?"

Wayne took the telegram in his usual stupid way. "There's some one knocking now."

Crewe paused, irresolutely, for he wanted to hurry off and secure half an hour's tête-à-tête with Veronica before the major appeared on the scene. "Oh, very well. Give me back the telegram. I expect it is the major. Show him in."

He flung the telegram fiercely into the fire, looked in the glass to make sure that his features wore a joyous expression, then rushed into the passage. "My dear guardian!" he said, wringing Graham's hand with fervor. "Come into the light. Let me look at you. Back safe and sound! This is too good to be true. Come in! come in! We've half an hour yet. Come in!"

He hurried the major, somewhat overwhelmed by the unexpected warmth of his reception, into the room. "Wayne!" he cried, "don't you see it's the major back again?"

"Yes, sir," said Wayne, stolidly. "I see, sir."

Somehow his tone sounded more real

than Crewe's. Its satisfaction was not so forced.

The major did not altogether approve of Crewe, but was touched by his fervor, and thought better of him than he had ever done before. At the same time, he could not help wishing that Crewe would look a little more manly and a little less like a spaniel.

But Crewe, bustling about on hospitable thoughts intent, seemed the very embodiment of joyousness.

"That's right, that's right. Sherry and bitters, Wayne. Sherry and bitters, and look sharp about it. It's a cold night. You'll want a pick-me-up, major."

Wayne hastily brought the sherry and bitters, and the major, his back to the fire, was about to drink, as they clinked glasses.

Crewe stopped him.

"To Veronica," he said, with hidden meaning; "to Veronica."

The major looked at him. Something in Crewe's tone struck him as unusual.

"Seen much of her lately?" he asked, in a voice which he strove to render indifferent.

"Yes." Crewe hesitated, artistically. "The fact is—I—I don't like to talk about it. You understand!"

"Can't say I do. Devilish good sherry this." The major abruptly put down his glass. "You were saying?"

"Oh, nothing, nothing. Only, Veronica and I seem to have——"

"Oh!" The major might have been talking about the weather. "Very good stuff of yours that sherry, Algy. We'd better have another glass to keep the cold out."

"That will stop him from saying anything to Veronica for a time," thought Crewe. "In common decency, he can't propose to her until she undeceives him. Now, if I can only make her believe he's in love with some one else! He can't say I've been lying to him, because I've told him nothing. I've only hinted. If he gets nasty about it, it's always easy to say he misunderstood me."

Wayne went out with the glasses, and the major looked round the room. "Fine collection of photographs," he said. "Very lightly clad, though, for this weather. By the way, we needn't start for a quarter of an hour. I'm keeping my cab."

"It's expensive," Crewe suggested, thereby hinting he did not often indulge in such luxuries.

"Oh, well, in a little while, you won't have to consider questions of that sort." The major looked thoughtfully into the fire.

Crewe's heart beat wildly. "Is it possible that you are good enough to increase my allowance?"

"Looks as if I can't help myself. Hang it all, Algy, I've had a facer this afternoon. A facer!"

"Lost some money?" queried Crewe, disconsolately. And yet, if the major had lost his money, how could he talk of increasing the allowance?

"Money? No, lad, no. There are other things one can lose as well as money." He gazed abstractedly at the wall.

Crewe waited for him to speak.

"I went down to see Harcourt this afternoon as I was passing Harley street. They showed me in to a wild-eyed man called Powerscourt, who was taking his work. Harcourt was away."

Crewe listened with indifference. "That's the man who is great on hypnotism. I suppose Harcourt had been sent for somewhere?"

"Yes; Sandringham. Some foreign potentate was ill there, and Harcourt had to go down in a hurry."

"A pity you missed him."

"Yes. No, thanks, I won't smoke now. I was shown into a room, and the fellow there took me for a patient."

Crewe pricked up his ears. "There's a lot of humbug about doctors. Ye-es?"

"Told me I'd heart disease, and couldn't live long. That's all. I thought you'd like to know."

"Of—course. But—but wasn't he mistaken? There's heart disease in my family, too."

"I laughed when I got outside.

Then I really had a pain in my heart. The beggar must have been right."

"Hard luck, after going through the campaign and getting the D.S.O."

"Oh, well"—the major spoke quietly enough—"some fellows had harder luck than that. Think of poor Huntingtower! He never had a chance. You'll step into my shoes, you know!"

"I don't want to think——"

"No, of course you don't. Not a word of this, mind, to Veronica. It would only upset her."

"You may be sure I sha'n't breathe a word."

Crewe turned away to hide the sparkle in his eyes. The good news was too much for him. He turned ghastly pale, staggered, and leaned helplessly against the wall.

The major sprang toward him in alarm. "What's the matter, lad? What's the matter? I thought you'd take it more pluckily."

"So—did—I. But—it's—it's so—sudden." Crewe pulled himself together with an effort. His face was ghastly.

"Pooh! If a soldier has to go, he likes to go suddenly. Time's up. Not a word to Veronica, mind."

"Not a word."

Wayne preceded them down-stairs to open the door. When the hansom dashed away into the darkness, he looked bewildered. "What's it all mean?" he wondered, for he had been listening at the keyhole; "what's it all mean?" 'Twasn't the major looked like dying. 'Twas him, curse him!" He shook a malevolent fist after the rapidly disappearing vehicle.

Wayne shut the door, and, lighting one of Crewe's best cigars, sat down to think the matter over. Then he went to the sideboard, and poured himself out a glass of sherry and bitters. "I can't see daylight," he repeated, from time to time. "I can't see daylight. If I can put a spoke in master's wheel—! Ah! if I can only put a spoke in his wheel!"

He contemptuously flicked Crewe's photograph off the mantelpiece, and

was about to tear it in two. "No, he'd miss it, and stop it out of my wages. If Miss Veronica didn't tip me every time I went up to the house, I shouldn't be able to live at all, bless her!"

He looked reverently at a portrait of Veronica which stood beside Crewe's, then moved it as far away as possible. "I'd rather see you dead, miss, than marry him," he groaned. "You sha'n't if I can help it. Where's the cigar-box? Thinks I can't open it, does he! I'll show him!"

Regardless of consequences, he abstracted another cigar. The box was guarded by a patent lock which was supposed to render theft impossible. Wayne opened it with the ease of a practised cracksman, then fastened the box again.

"He may think a lot, but he can't prove anything," he said, with a thoughtful grin. "Not him! I'll smoke this one in bed, with my head under the clothes; then he won't smell it."

IV

VERONICA

BLUE-EYED, fluffy-haired Mrs. Marjoribanks—she always said that the way her name was pronounced gave uneducated people the impression that she did not know how to spell—knocked at Veronica's door in an airy, innocent way which meant mischief. Although she was in the habit of telling people that her chief claim to distinction lay in being Veronica's aunt, Veronica puzzled her. She wanted to know her niece's inmost thoughts, and Veronica was equally resolved that she would take no one into her confidence. If her aunt wished to find out things she had no business to know, such curiosity must be discouraged.

But Mrs. Marjoribanks, although she owed all the comfort she got out of life to Veronica's kindness, could not repress her curiosity. It seemed unnatural that such a beautiful girl should remain so curiously apathetic when lovers came to woo. Veronica

affected to believe that they were merely friends, and Mrs. Marjoribanks wished to know the meaning of this affectation. It was absurd that a girl, young, beautiful, rich, should preserve the temperament of an iceberg which declines to melt even when under the influence of Summer suns. All that interested Veronica seemed to be the Boer War. Now that the war was a thing of the past, it was time that Veronica should become like the Boers, and settle down. Several men had mistaken her interest in military tactics for a more personal one. Mrs. Marjoribanks was beginning to grow tired of having to hint to these warlike wooers that her niece's interest in them was purely impersonal. The warlike wooers protested that their interest in Veronica was of a far different nature. They wanted Mrs. Marjoribanks to explain this to Veronica, but Veronica never allowed her aunt to explain; she said that, as a rule, military tactics were far more interesting than "the military," and she could not understand how they—"the military"—had ever thought otherwise. Thus, foiled in her attempt to pave the way for various brilliant warriors, Mrs. Marjoribanks at length declined to have anything to do with Veronica's love-affairs; she said they were too frigid. Besides, all her own spare time was occupied in training Professor Cheyne to observe social conventions. Every now and again, just as she had imparted a little superficial polish to the professor, he "threw back," as it were, and she had to begin all over again.

But, on the evening after Major Graham's return to town, Mrs. Marjoribanks noticed the change in Veronica, who seemed to glow and radiate sunshine as she despatched an answer to Graham's telegram announcing his arrival at Southampton. Veronica's telegram to the major invited him to come to dinner the next night and tell her of the dangers he had passed. She did not finish the quotation, which was just as well, for telegraph clerks are likely to become confused when

confronted with poetical sentiment instead of stock-exchange quotations. All the afternoon, Mrs. Marjoribanks had been indulging in the, for her, unusual arithmetical occupation of putting two and two together. As a result of this mental feat, she could not decide whether two and two made three or five. She determined, by means of various insidious wiles, to get Veronica's unconscious assistance in the matter, so went up to her niece's boudoir and entered hastily before Veronica could remove the major's photograph from the table. Poor Huntingtower's portrait had a little niche in the wall to itself, for Veronica had never forgotten his promise "to look after Graham."

"Is that you, aunt?" Veronica asked, in rather amazed tones. "You know I always like to be alone for a little while before dinner."

"Yes, my dear, I know. Solitude prepares one for a proper appreciation of the good dinner to come. At the same time, I also know that it is not good for man to be alone," sententiously remarked Mrs. Marjoribanks, under the impression that she was quoting something very profound.

"But, you see, aunt, I'm not a man—I'm a woman. At least, all your military friends seem to think so."

"Well, it isn't good for a woman to be alone, either—she's no one to talk to," inconsequently added Mrs. Marjoribanks, sinking into an easy-chair.

"I thought that this kind of thing had been threshed out long ago in the Garden of Eden," said Veronica, rather wearily.

"Yes, my dear. Yes, I dare say it has, although there weren't any uniforms in the garden. Besides, we've advanced so much that I don't think fruit tempts any woman nowadays. You see, it's always in season, and a woman likes to eat things out of season. Otherwise, there's no pleasure in them. After all, my dear, it wasn't fruit which led to Eve's downfall—it was the serpent's conversational powers. You see, Adam was a good deal occupied in agricultural pursuits, con-

sequently, he was not much of a talker, unless you believe Milton, who never let poor Eve get in a word edgeways. Any woman with a Miltonic husband would be justified in adopting the serpentine path to destruction. Women always appreciate wit, sparkle, epigram in a man; they don't want to be bored. And I am given to understand that there were no shops when Fall fashions first came into vogue. Shops are so highly moral in their unconscious influence over us. Give a woman her choice of looking at shops or a handsome man, and, in nine cases out of ten, she will choose the shops. The shops aren't thinking of themselves. In nine cases out of ten, a handsome man never thinks of anything but himself. That is why I want to marry an ugly man like the professor. I shall be able to provide all the beauty necessary in the establishment; the professor will confine himself to providing the establishment."

Veronica roused herself with an amused look, as she went over to the fireplace and sat down in a low chair. "Do you know, auntie, I believe that if you had been born a man, you would have been what Algy calls 'a thoroughly bad lot.'"

"Then I should only have entered upon the heritage of most men," retorted Mrs. Marjoribanks, gracefully lounging opposite Veronica. "After all, my dear, you mustn't blame the men, for we can't help letting them see that the bad ones are always so much more attractive than the good. In her heart, a woman always admires a dash of devil. Good men are like the good heroines of a novel. You know just what they are going to do in any circumstances, whereas your bad men are always ready to kick over the traces——"

"Auntie! auntie! At your age, too!" Veronica stretched lovely white arms above her head. "You really have a brilliant imagination, but you mix your metaphors. Horses kick over the traces, not men."

"Not always."

"What do you mean?"

"Sometimes, it's asses," ungrammatically declared Mrs. Marjoribanks. She got up, walked about the room, and audibly commented upon the photographs scattered about. "'Portrait of Major Graham, on his favorite hunter, Devilshoof.' H'm, very good. 'Portrait of Major Graham in uniform.' Mess jacket a bit tight. 'Portrait of Major Graham, mowing the lawn at Rendlesham.' Lawn looks as if he'd been trying to shave it with a patent razor, and couldn't manage the corners. 'Portrait of Major Graham leaning over side of trooper "Serapis."' Wistful expression of major's right eye very fine. 'Por——'" She broke off, suddenly. "Seems to be a good deal of the major about this room, Veronica, although you don't care for military men, as a rule."

Veronica did not appear to hear. She was looking into the fire, with half-closed eyes.

"Seems to be a good deal of the major about this room," repeated Mrs. Marjoribanks, with a daring which astonished herself.

Veronica still did not appear to hear. Mrs. Marjoribanks was about to repeat her remark for the third time, when Veronica roused herself from her abstraction. "Have I ever been deliberately unkind to you, auntie?"

"Never," said Mrs. Marjoribanks, with conviction. "You've always been the dearest girl in the world."

"Have I ever said anything unpleasant to remind you of the position you occupy in my house?"

"Never," repeated Mrs. Marjoribanks, uneasily, seeing that she had gone too far.

"Well, I shall say something very unkind indeed," Veronica declared, with distinct traces of bitterness in her voice, "if you make any remarks about the furniture of this room."

"I shouldn't call photographs furniture unless they were very wooden indeed. Veronica?" Mrs. Marjoribanks came round to the hearth-rug.

"Well?"

"I'm so sorry, my dear. It all

comes of my wanting to pump you about the major."

"I know. You shouldn't have done it. I never say anything to you about Professor Cheyne and the way he perpetually dangles after you."

"Sometimes, I wish you would. I meant well just now, but it seems I've failed to express my meaning."

"Yes, you've failed—your attempt at expressions was most improper. And you've hurt me."

Mrs. Marjoribanks got down on her knees beside Veronica, and put her arms round her.

"Wasn't it a bit hard, Veronica, to remind me of your—your goodness to me?"

Veronica pushed her gently away.

"Yes, it was hard, auntie. I'm sorry. But I'm worried."

"So am I," declared Mrs. Marjoribanks, whimsically. "There's a man I want to marry, and he won't look at me otherwise than if I were a specimen cockchafer on a pin."

"You!" Veronica gazed down at her. "You really want to marry again? Take care, auntie, or it will become a habit."

"Yes; why shouldn't I? You've all the insolence of youth," declared Mrs. Marjoribanks. "Wait until you become a padded edition of yourself at twenty. Then you'll want a little romance, a little sentiment, in your life. People seem to think that, if you're fat, you've no right to be sentimental. Why, ask any novelist and he'll tell you there's nothing like a layer of fat for keeping the sentiment in a woman."

"But you're not too fat."

"No, I am only inclined to what people call 'embongpong.'" She began to laugh. "After all, you are the middle-aged woman, Veronica. I am the young girl bubbling over with sentiment, with the desire to be loved, to have a man think all the world of me. I want to be wooed by some one who will see into my heart and find it as youthful as your body. I've been a widow ten years. Ten years! And I don't like it. The late lamented was

not all that he ought to have been, but he did worship me in spite of his—well, eccentricities. And it is such a comfort to have a man in the house. The very look of his hats in the hall seems to strengthen one. Men may not be reasonable creatures, but they are muscular; and a woman always respects a man whom she has goaded into nearly knocking her down, when he just doubles his fists and doesn't do it. She knows he ought to do it, and is a little bit frightened at her own daring."

"You seem to have had rather a stormy matrimonial career!"

"Stormy! It is all halcyon days when I look back upon it. Nothing makes a woman's life so interesting as having a man to please or displease. It's an experiment you ought to make, Veronica." She got up and stood looking down upon the girl's dark hair, her magnificent eyes, her clear complexion and regular features. "Men may be a bit of a nuisance sometimes, but life is much more of a nuisance without them. It's so dull."

"Is it?"

Veronica again became absorbed in the fire. She was not interested in abstract questions.

"It is; and if the professor—stupid old—old fossilized mummy—doesn't propose to me, in self-defense I shall propose to him. I'm not going to be 'a lily maid of Astolat' kind of creature, and fade away. It—it would take such a time for me to fade. Have you ever noticed a big pair of shooting-boots in my room?"

"Ye-es, I have. They seemed out of place."

"I look at those boots every day, and wish they weren't empty," Mrs. Marjoribanks declared, with conviction. "I want a man to bully and tease and love and quarrel with. I'm tired of this cat-in-an-arm-chair kind of life."

"Do you mean you want some one to scratch?"

"Yes—and then make it up again. Rather than go down to my grave a widow, I'd cheerfully marry a chim-

ney-sweeper. Even then, life couldn't be blacker than it is without one."

"Why?" asked Veronica, without the light of enthusiasm in her eyes. "You know this thirst for matrimony isn't womanly. If we women like a man, we must keep it to ourselves."

"Must we? Well, I sha'n't. I shall confide it to him. He's the proper person to know about it. After all, a woman's thirst for matrimony is only the outward and visible sign of the inward invisible grace which prompts her to make a man happy. But, oh, Veronica, I do wish he would come along. Sometimes, I feel tempted to advertise for him. I told Professor Cheyne the last time he was here that no woman's life was complete without a man to guide her. But, then, he's not a man—he's only a primordial, atomic, monkeyfied globule."

"And what did he say?"

"He said"—she began to laugh in spite of her vexation—"oh, he said, 'It's a very proper spirit of humility, Mistress March-banks.' I—I could have thrown one of his ancestors at him—I mean a monkey—only there weren't any handy."

"Did he say anything else?"

"Oh, yes; he confided to me that he is writing a book on the 'Proper Subjection of Woman.'"

"He is an old bachelor. What does he know about it?"

"A good deal more than he did a few weeks ago. Veronica, he's actually had his hair cut. Isn't that a sign of saving grace? He looks almost civilized."

"Who does?"

"The professor. But it is time for me to dress. I see you've already done so."

"Yes, dear."

"Well, I must be going. It takes time to get into that pink silk, for neither of us will give way, or stretch a point to accommodate the other."

Veronica made no reply. Suddenly, Mrs. Marjoribanks came back, and, bending down, kissed her on the lips.

"My dear, my dear, I want you to be very happy."

Mrs. Marjoribanks's pretty face flushed, her blue eyes shone with the light of enthusiasm. "Don't marry that little worm," she implored. "Yes, I must say it. Don't marry Algy. I'd rather see you in your grave. Now, turn me away, if you like, and send me into lodgings in Bloomsbury to starve. I dare say the professor would come and feed me on British Museum sandwiches. He gave me a British Museum sandwich once, and, until he undeceived me, I thought it was a flint axe-head with which he wanted to woo me."

Veronica kissed her, gratefully. "You sha'n't live on axe-heads. And you mustn't mind my moods. I'm rather worried. I feel as you do about Algy, yet I have nothing to go upon. He puzzles me."

"He doesn't puzzle me." Mrs. Marjoribanks was half-way to the door. "I'm going to watch him. What a pity the major is so blind!"

"So blind?"

"Yes, blind as a bat. But, I forgot, I mustn't talk about him." And she glided away.

Veronica waited until her aunt had disappeared. Then she walked to the table, and gravely regarded the major's photograph, looked into the honest eyes, wistful with the sadness of parting from her.

"You are a good man," she said; "a good man. Duty is ever your watchword. The petty meanness and temptations of the world touch you not. You are Galahad, with a touch of the dreamer, the visionary, gentle as a woman, sweet-tempered as a child, blind—blind as a bat. Oh, George, you do not know how blind you are."

She bent over the table, took the photograph in her hands, and pressed it to her lips. "You went away from me to serve your country, put aside all thought of self, said nothing to me although my heart was breaking for you. You made light of suffering, hardship, disaster; you never faltered, never doubted you would win through in the end. And you nursed that poor dying boy although you were wounded your-

self. And now you have come back to me! If you were ever away from me again, I could not bear it. I have been lonely so long—have born the suspense, the anguish, the cruel uncertainty from day to day. Sometimes, I saw you dead, sometimes, wounded, lying out on the veldt with no one to succor you, your only shelter the stars, no hand to bind your wounds, no lips to speak words of comfort and of hope. George! George! You must never leave me again."

Her maid knocked at the door.

"Yes, Simmons? What is it?"

"The major, madam. He has come back."

"I am coming down directly." She turned to the mirror, and hardly recognized herself. Her cheeks were flushed, her great eyes shining. The corners of her proud mouth broke into a little smile. She was radiant, transformed, her heart beat quickly with happiness. He had come back!

She ran lightly down the stairs, softly opened the door, went toward him with outstretched hands. Involuntarily, he took her in his arms; their lips met.

"Good evening, Veronica," said Algy's silky voice, with a certain amount of spitefulness in it. "Wish I'd gone to the wars, too."

Veronica drew away from the major's embrace. He stood looking at her, appealingly.

"After all, I am only human, Veronica. Forgive me."

"Forgive you! I am proud of you. Accept my homage." Algy writhed as the major's eyes met hers. Somehow, they made him feel smaller than usual—more of a contemptible, scheming villain.

"This is my reward," the major said, quietly. "Veronica, it is good to see you again; but I—I have come back alone. That poor boy, Huntingtower—!"

"I know—I know. But you have come back. You have come back!"

"I would have come back from the grave to you! From the grave, Veronica!"

Suddenly, he remembered, and turned away. Her fresh young beauty made his heart ache. Never before had he kissed her, not even in the hour of parting.

Mrs. Marjoribanks's entrance created a much-needed diversion, for Algy was livid with rage.

"Algy, you've trodden on my dress," she screamed; and gave Veronica and the major time to recover themselves. "Major, you promised to bring me a lock of Kruger's hair. You know you did. Where is it? Yes, and you may kiss me, too, if you like. Mustachios and I have long—regrettably long—been strangers to each another."

And, in a moment, the spell was broken, but it must be confessed that the major's salute was rather tepid. Veronica, laughingly regarding Mrs. Marjoribanks, became her customary self, save for heightened color and shining eyes.

"Dinner, madam," said the footman, apologetically, as if it were no time for mere feeding when the major had returned. The other servants, under various pretexts, came as near the drawing-room door as they dared.

"Dinner—at a moment like this when the returning hero embraces his friends. Some people would expect to dine in the midst of an earthquake," declared Mrs. Marjoribanks. "Now I come to think of it, I'm famished. No, no, Algy, give me your arm. The major takes in Veronica." And she dexterously captured the reluctant Algy before he could approach Veronica.

"Come and see me to-morrow morning," said Veronica, as the major offered his arm. "I want to know all about the dangers you have passed."

"And he loved her that she did pity them," inaudibly murmured the irrepressible Mrs. Marjoribanks. "Now, Algy, don't stand gnawing your mustache like a stage villain, or you'll be 'resulted and treated with ironing,' as Mrs. Slipslop says. Are we never to get any dinner to-night? One would think that the major was starving in

Mafeking instead of our feasting him in London."

"To-morrow!" thought the major, as Veronica lightly placed her hand upon his arm. How little she knew what the morrow might bring forth! Her hand trembled on his coat-sleeve, her eyes looked into his with a light they had never worn before. "To-morrow!" he echoed, bitterly, to himself. "To-morrow! Let us eat, drink, and be merry, for to-morrow we—die!" But he was living, with all the fullness of life before him—to-night. To-night was his. Let the morrow take care of itself. Fate owed him one evening of happiness.

"You will come to lunch to-morrow?" Veronica asked, softly.

"Yes, I will come to say——"

She looked up with a happy smile.

"Say it to-morrow, George. Say it to-morrow, or I shall hear it in dreams all night."

V

"TO-MORROW"

"NONSENSE, of course you're not returning to the Métropole," Crewe had said to Graham, earlier in the evening. "You are going to share my quarters with me. I've told Wayne to sleep down-stairs. You take my room, I have his. From what the doctor said, it is evidently important for you to be kept quiet. How can you keep quiet in a place where people are coming and going all day? Impossible. Wayne will have all your things arranged for you by the time we get back."

Graham, as he thanked Crewe, began to feel that his ward had developed a number of unexpected good points. When he went up to bed, worn out with the emotions of the day, his face had lost its bronzed look, and was ghastly. "Nice sort of fellow I am," he said, regarding himself critically in the glass, "if I can't take a facer like a man instead of whining about it. But—Veronica!"

Wayne valeted him with assiduous

attention. Once or twice, he opened his mouth as if to say something; then thought better of it, and shut his lips tightly. The major, however, was too preoccupied to notice this. When Wayne had made him comfortable for the night, Graham gave him a sovereign, and told him to bring his shaving-water at seven. Fatigued by the conflicting emotions of the day, he soon fell asleep, and began to dream of Veronica.

The major was a light sleeper. In the middle of the night something suddenly landed on his chest, dug its claws into him, and leaped to the floor with a yell. Shivering and shaking, his heart going like a sledge-hammer, he got out of bed, struck a light, and discovered a half-starved cat in a corner. He angrily opened the door, drove it out, and locked himself in.

"If this sort of thing is going to upset me, life won't be worth living," he said to himself. "Can't think how that cat got into the room. It couldn't have opened the door for itself."

In the midst of this wondering, his heart ceased to beat with frightful rapidity, and he gradually fell asleep.

Crewe, listening for the sound of a sudden cry from the major's room, congratulated himself on the devilish idea which had prompted him to throw the cat into it, then shrank from the horror of his crime, and covered his head with the bed-clothes. He feared to hear an agonized appeal for help from the major, but Graham was tougher than he thought. "I'll think of something else by to-morrow," he mused, disappointedly. "If I keep on shocking him with a fresh surprise every day, it must tell on him in the long run. A man with a heart like that is bound to drop dead without a moment's notice, and a sudden scare is the best way to bring it about. There's no doubt, whatever, that he ought not to live. He's not a fellow who can enjoy the spending of money as I do. He's always been used to it—it's no pleasure to him—I haven't. Besides, with heart disease, it's absurd to think that he can enjoy living; it's

really doing him a kindness to help him to get rid of his life. Instead of thinking of falling in love with Veronica, he ought to be making his peace with all mankind. Whereas, I am young, lusty, filled with the wine of life, and lack only two things to make me happy. One is the love of Veronica, the other, my guardian's money. And, curiously enough, I fancy that the one depends upon the other. No ducats, no Veronica. In the ordinary course of events, even with heart disease, Graham might be good for another ten years at least. That means that I shall have to live on his beggarly allowance. He'd no business to have been my father's friend if he hadn't intended to make me his heir. If Graham hadn't meant to make a rich man of me, why did he give me expensive tastes—send me to Eton and Oxford? How could I work after that? If he had apprenticed me to an East End institution where they teach a boy to make blacking-brushes and things, I should have been much better equipped for the fray. Not that I ever loved work—seems to me it's only an invention of commonplace people to excuse their own existence."

As they sat at breakfast the next morning, Crewe could see that the major was preoccupied. Crewe, in spite of his self-control, found himself fretful, nervous, irritable, when the major told him of the cat episode.

"The brute must have been under the bed. It's just like Wayne not to have turned it out before. Wayne, why aren't you more careful?"

"No cat in the room when I went away, sir," said Wayne, doggedly, as he handed the major his bacon and kidneys.

"Don't answer me back," almost shouted Crewe. Then, seeing the major's surprised face, "I didn't sleep very well," he lamely declared. "I seemed to have an idea that something was going to happen."

"Take a look round the room to-night, Wayne, and see that the brute doesn't get in again," said the major,

picking up *The Times* as if he were tired of the fuss.

"Yes, sir," said Wayne, almost inaudibly; but his lips moved, and the major, looking up, caught his eyes fixed on himself with an odd mixture of fear and compassion.

When Wayne had left the room, the major threw down the paper, and stretched himself.

"I'll just have a stroll round. Then I'm going to lunch with Veronica. What do you generally do with yourself in the daytime?"

"Oh, I do a little journalism," Crewe untruthfully declared, in order to account for his idle, aimless day.

"That's right," said the major, heartily. "Anything's better than being idle. Bone-idle beggars are always the most helpless."

Crewe did not like being called a "bone-idle beggar," even by implication.

"I'd better meet you at Veronica's," he said, jealously.

"I think not," the major declared, with military decision. "There are several things I want to have a chat with her about, and you'd only be in the way. Some other time, my dear chap; some other time, if you don't mind. You see her every day, I suppose?"

"Yes, of course," said Crewe, lying again. "Considering our relations to each other, I——"

"Ah, yes; it's just those relations about which I wanted to ask you. You rather implied that you were engaged to Veronica?"

"I never said so."

"No; that's why I don't understand it. Are you engaged to her?"

"Yes."

He turned away his face as he said it.

Something in his tone seemed to strike the major. "Going to try to make a career for yourself?"

"Ye-es."

But his tone was not sanguine.

"Prove to me that you have made a start," said Graham, preparing to go out, "and I'll quadruple your allowance. You can't live on a girl's

money, and you've none of your own."

In his heart, Crewe did not see why he should not live on a girl's money, especially if that girl happened to be Veronica. But he wrung the major's hand with an air of well-feigned enthusiasm, and declared that he could never sufficiently thank him for his kindness.

"If you only knew how I'd like to show my thanks," he declared, "you'd be astonished."

"Yes, I dare say I should." And with this equally enigmatic utterance, Graham went out. He was beginning to discover that a little of Crewe's society went a very long way. It would not be very pleasant for Veronica if she also grew to be of the same way of thinking.

The major spent an enjoyable morning at his tailor's, ordering this, that and the other, with reckless prodigality. The tailor congratulated him on having come through the campaign in such good form, and Graham, with momentary bitterness, thought how little the man knew about it. For the present, he resolved to make no alteration in his mode of life. Veronica's manner on the previous evening had filled him with such joy that it had thrown all fear of death into the background. The only drawback was this supposed engagement of hers to Crewe. Not the only drawback—there was the heart disease. That was always to be reckoned with.

The major became conscious of a fierce jealousy of Crewe; but this only made him more just. What business had he, a dying man, to come between two young lovers, to fill their days with the bitterness of his own impending doom? And yet, as he drew near Grosvenor square, he felt conscious of an unreasoning grief—a despair almost equal to that with which he had sailed away from Veronica. He was shown into Veronica's little morning-room, and she came to him, shyly, sweetly, slowly, as if to taste the fullness of her joy in coming.

Something in his manner at once

arrested her happiness. The major seemed perplexed, confused, worried. He carried a curious little oblong case in his hand, and laid it on the table.

"Now sit down and talk," said Veronica, with an attempt at gaiety. "You are looking bothered this morning. Has anything gone wrong?"

The major regarded her, searchingly. There was a clear light in her eye, a radiance in her smile which he had never seen before. Crewe had undoubtedly told the truth. He opened the jewel-case, and pushed it toward her. "Here is a little wedding-present for you, Veronica."

Veronica was amazed.

"Is this a jest?"

She shut up the case, and handed it back to him without looking at the sparkling stones.

"No." The major was surprised in his turn. "How should it be! Am I not to have the privilege of an old—friend?"

"Oh, yes, you have many privileges"—Veronica turned upon him almost bitterly—"but I do not know by what right you assume this one."

"Crewe told me—" The major paused, in confusion.

"What did he tell you?"

"He—he hinted that you were engaged to him."

"He said that! Oh!"

"If he did not absolutely say it, he implied as much."

"The—the wretch! And you were in such a hurry to believe him that you brought me this!" She swept the case from the table with an impetuous hand.

"No, I did not want to believe him."

"Why not?"

"Because I——"

"Yes?" Veronica came a little nearer to him. "You did not want to believe him because——?"

The major suddenly sat down, and put his face in his hands. It had dawned upon him that he had no right to speak to her, to link her young life with his.

Veronica spoke softly, sweetly, tenderly. "There is something troubling

you?" She came to his side. "Tell me! What is it?"

The major could not tell her. Veronica's hand was on his shoulder, her warm breath upon his cheek. The sudden conviction seized him that, if he confessed his love, she would accept it. He got up, and faced her squarely.

"Veronica," he said, gravely, "in happier circumstances, I meant to tell you that I loved you—that, night and day, your face has been ever before me. There hasn't been an hour, a minute, even, when I have been free, that I haven't thought of you, haven't pictured this home-coming, haven't dreamed of what I wanted to say to you, of what I hoped you would say to me—and now I can't say it. I dare not."

"You — cannot! Dare not! Are you, then, a coward?"

He flushed a little. Something in the weary light of his eyes smote Veronica with sudden pity and compassion—pity for him, compassion for herself.

"I don't understand. I don't understand. You love me, and yet—" She hesitated.

"I love you, and yet I cannot ask you to marry me."

"It—it is somewhat new to me to sue to any one," she said, haughtily. "For years past, I have believed in you. You shatter my faith at a blow. I do not ask who this other woman is, or where you met her, but when you went away you looked at me as if I were the woman you loved."

"And I meant it, too."

He stepped eagerly toward her. She waved him back.

"You meant it—then. Who is she? When did she first come between us? I have a right to know."

"She! She! What do you mean?"

"Who is the woman who has taken you away from me? Was it some one in South Africa?"

"No woman has ever taken me away from you. There isn't any woman—there never has been any woman—there never will be any other woman!" he

said, impetuously. "If I can't marry you, I will die unwed."

It was impossible to doubt his sincerity. She was sore, angry, humiliated; angry, that he should have divined her love for him, angry with herself that she had not hidden it.

"I was too honest with you. I should have been more cunning," she said, bitterly.

"Cunning?"

"Yes—cunning to hide my secret."

"Can there be any question of cunning between us?"

"I had hoped not—I had thought not. But it seems that I was mistaken."

"You are not mistaken. There is a horrible fatality—something which has overtaken me suddenly. I can't tell you what it is now. Don't ask me. It would sacrifice your young life."

She looked him squarely in the face.

"Aren't women meant to be creatures of sacrifice? Is it anything new for a woman to be sacrificed to a—to a man?"

"I don't know. I trust it is. At any rate, I will not sacrifice you to my—whims."

She smiled at him.

"I am so sorry. You must think me rather abrupt. We—we were almost tragic, weren't we?" she said, wistfully. "Do you know, I am inclined to think that I have a genius for sacrifice. Won't you put it to the test? Nothing makes a woman so happy as the knowledge that she is sacrificing herself. She is only unhappy when she isn't allowed to do it."

"You don't ask me what it is that has come between us?"

"No," she said, simply, "no; I don't ask. If you felt you could have done so, I am sure that you would have told me. The main point is that I am a woman, and that there should be no other woman. I can forgive anything else."

"There is nothing to forgive. It is the hand of fate."

She looked at him, searchingly.

"I don't ask you to tell me. I am going to find out for myself. I sus-

pect Algy has had a hand in it. Don't trouble to deny it. Now, I am going to be unwomanly, and tell you that I love you, that I will never give you up, that your love is the one thing I have wanted ever since I can remember. Hush-h! Don't speak! You are looking frightfully ill and worried; but my heart tells me that you are true to me. Nothing else matters."

"Nothing?"

"No, nothing." She smiled, bravely. "Now, come to luncheon. We must take care of 'Soldier, soldier, home from the wars.'"

She picked up the jewel-case from the floor. "Don't think me ungrateful. I did not mean to despise your gift. Your lips are quite blue—you must be half starved."

He took her hands, and drew her to him. She met his kiss frankly. At the touch of her young lips, he groaned, for her love meant so much to him.

She looked at him triumphantly. "You would never have dared to kiss me had you cared for any one else."

"It is something new to me to think that you can be jealous."

"It is something new to myself—I didn't know it was there—but I am the most jealous woman alive. Now, come to luncheon. Let us be happy. You are only keeping this back from me because you don't want to make me unhappy. Here is your necklace."

He opened the case, and put the flashing jewels round her fair throat. "I brought them from South Africa—virgin stones—for you. How glad they must be, after centuries in the caverns of the earth, to draw fresh life from you!"

She lifted the glittering gems, pressed them softly to her lips, then took them off and put them back in the case. "I should not have liked a gift from you which had ever been worn by another woman," she said, happily. "It would not have seemed the same."

"And I should not like to think that these stones had been desecrated by the touch of another woman's hand," he said, with sudden fire.

"Come, we will go to luncheon. Only,

mind that I am going to find a way out of our difficulties. I am jealous of everything which keeps you from me. Come."

He followed her, torn by conflicting emotions.

VI

THE PROFESSOR PROPOSES

"My dear!" Mrs. Marjoribanks entered Veronica's boudoir the next afternoon, with ill-concealed agitation. "Professor Cheyne has come. For some time past there have been—well, indications of his coming. He asked for—you!"

"Did he?" Veronica's tone was languid. "That was rather rude of him. Do you mind going down to entertain him, auntie? I don't feel equal to his exhaustive, and exhausting, theories to-day. Besides, he evidently wants to see you, although you always quarrel. He seems to look upon you as a tonic. Do you mind?"

"Of course I don't mind. But what, quarreling apart, do you think he has really come for?"

"Afternoon tea," said Veronica, with a spice of mischief in her tones. "That's all. At his age, tea and topics comprise the universe."

"I think not, my dear. I do think you ought to look after me better." Mrs. Marjoribanks rippled over with laughter. "I really believe that he has come to ask my hand of you. What Jane Austen calls 'permission to pay his addresses' would seem to be his penultimate object. I am the ultimate one."

"Dinner is most men's ultimate object. Woman is merely a preliminary leading to the proper preparation of dinner. But why should he ask me? What have I to do with it?"

"Everything. You are my most influential and important surviving relative and have the—the wisdom of youth. According to the school in which the professor has been brought up, he would naturally, irrespective of age, look upon you as the head of the

family. The professor is punctilious in these little matters. It is his attention to detail which has made him such a brilliant success as a professor. His attentions to me have not been quite so brilliant; but, then, I suppose I am too full of details for him to grasp all at once."

"Oh! Suppose you act for me, auntie, and settle it between yourselves. I don't wish to be the stern guardian. Then you can do exactly as you like without going through the idle form of consulting me." She sighed.

Mrs. Marjoribanks looked at herself in a large mirror.

"It is fortunate that I am exceptionally well dressed to-day. Something seemed to whisper that this would be an eventful day for me, and I told Elise to do her best. That is why I can hardly breathe. Like the situation, I am rather strained. With this dress, and in a subdued light, I might be taken for thirty—by an inexperienced man of the professor's age. I wonder if I can manage to sit near the pink lamp-shade."

"Do you think that, if he has made up his mind to propose to you he will allow himself to be influenced by such trifles as pink lamp-shades?"

"My dear girl, you can never tell what influences a man. Sometimes he prefers to be influenced by something shady. It reminds him of his own past."

"It is generally the woman who doesn't know what she wants," murmured Veronica. "Aren't you keeping him waiting a long time? He may grow restive if you already begin to ride him on the curb."

"They also serve who only stand and wait," retorted Mrs. Marjoribanks, using her powder-puff with considerable skill. "I mustn't look too 'slim,' as the Boers say; it might make him apprehensive with regard to the future."

"From what I know of the professor, he will probably be sitting down or striding about and calling you names."

"H'm, yes, probably. Fancy my

'bagging' him so soon! Most people consider him as inaccessible as a mountain goat. That's the effect of wearing a beard."

"Aren't you rather 'proticipating'?"

"Yes; that's where the fun comes in. After all, the professor may be waiting merely to lecture. He said the other day how much he disapproved of me—I was so unsound on logarithms. If it be true that disapproval begets love, so many people have disapproved of me that I ought to be the best-loved woman in the world. I want to keep the professor waiting. Waiting will make him nervous; then, he won't be so cocksure about my accepting him. A man always idealizes the thing for which he has to wait—until he gets it. Then he idealizes himself, and tries to make his ideal live down to him."

"Are you going to accept him? Why not get a post as keeper of the museum mummies instead of adopting this particular one?"

"Ah, now you're spiteful. He's only about fifty, and far more thoroughly preserved than the most juvenile mummy. Besides, the professor is much better than nothing at all. Some one has to wear those fetish boots which I have been keeping for so long, and a mummy wouldn't be equal to them. I'm tired of seeing them—the boots, not the mummies—in my room. I used to make a tremendous fuss when they were muddy; but I'm so sick of being a widow that I would even allow a man to smoke in my drawing-room rather than not have a husband to fuss over. We may hate to admit it, my dear, but a woman with a well-regulated mind is never happy unless she has a husband to make miserable."

"You're much too humble to-day, auntie. Besides, he is such a scarecrow. You'd have to enamel, or whitewash him, or something."

"There isn't enough of him to cut down—he only wants trimming, my dear, only wants trimming. A shillingsworth of haircutting at Truefitt's will make him quite presentable. Once I get my shorn lamb, I'll temper

my temper to him as long as he behaves himself. Of course, I must play my fish carefully."

"Very well. I—I don't think I'd care to play with the professor. I have an idea that mountain goats can butt, if aroused. Remember, that if you do accept him, he will be my uncle."

"So he will. I'd forgotten that. Most people are glad of an uncle—if they are poor. You won't spoil sport by coming down, will you? I shall have to be very careful or he will break away."

"Oh, no, of course I am not coming down. I have more sympathy. Hadn't you better take a landing-net with you?"

"It seems to me there is a little too much bait already—a landing-net will only accentuate it. You can't catch a mountain goat in a landing-net." Mrs. Marjoribanks gave rather a rueful look at her ample proportions. "I'll tell Warburton to send your tea up-stairs, if you don't mind. The last time the professor came, he hinted a partiality for tea-cakes. Am I morally justified in luring him on with tea-cakes? He says that in his old house near the British Museum, he never sees a tea-cake. The early Britons never took tea, and most of the museum officials model themselves on the early Britons, except that they don't paint. They look blue, instead."

"Ah, well, if the museum officials don't paint, there are a good many women who do. Aren't you a little too giddy over so serious a thing?"

"Do you mean tea-cakes or professors? They're both a little difficult to swallow without buttering. The first time a man came to propose to me," declared Mrs. Marjoribanks, with reminiscent enjoyment, "I opened my Bible haphazard for an appropriate text, and found something about smiting a man under the fifth rib. No wonder there aren't enough husbands to go round when people waste them like that. And the Biblical authorities have always seemed so very emphatic about the fifth rib; all the others appear to have been too vulgar to mention.

Now, if I go down in a natural, light-hearted way, the professor will think I'm accustomed to proposals, and then he won't be so nervous."

"He! He's about as nervous as the sphinx. You are the only person I have ever seen thoroughly upset him. As you are strong, be merciful."

Mrs. Marjoribanks was half-way to the door. "I expect he's feeling very bad by this time. That's the right mood to get him into. When a man says he isn't good enough for a woman, he's always telling the truth, though he doesn't want the woman to think so. Wish good luck to my fishing!"

"Good luck to your fishing," mechanically repeated Veronica, and Mrs. Marjoribanks went gaily away.

She halted a moment outside the drawing-room door, which was slightly ajar. To her amazement, she heard the professor declaiming with furious emphasis:

"Live thou, whose infamy is not thy fame!
Live! Fear no heavier chastisement from me,
Thou noteless blot on a remembered name!
But be thyself, and know thyself to be!
And ever at——"

"Is the woman never coming?" he broke off, in a rage. "If I have to wait much longer, I shall either smash the furniture or recite the curse from 'The Cenci.' I don't like these extreme measures, but my reason will flee if I don't do something. Disgraceful! Perfectly disgraceful to keep a professor waiting as if he were a poodle."

She coughed. "Ahem, professor. Here I am at last. Are you thinking of going on the stage? We need a *jeune premier* badly. All our leading young men on the English stage are fifty, and all the leading ladies grandmothers."

The professor, although confused by this unprovoked attack, wheeled round and glared at her, watch in hand. "You said precisely four o'clock, and it's a quarter past," he growled. "What have I to do with the English stage? I was only occupying my mind."

"Well, isn't that sometimes in a vacant stage? You ought to have realized that every hunted thing is allowed a quarter of an hour's grace—particularly when it is ordering tea-cakes for the hunter." She smiled sweetly as she gave him her hand. "Put away your watch, professor, and tell me why you were calling me 'a noteless blot.'"

"I was just reciting whimsy-whamsy stuff to pass the time," he said, fiercely. "I've sacrificed the Royal Society for you, and you keep me pacing up and down like——"

"A bear in a cage—a grizzly bear." She looked at his long locks as she motioned him to sit down. "What do you mean by sacrificing royal society? Were you to take afternoon tea with his Majesty?"

"Such ignorance is incredible! Incredible!" The professor turned almost purple in the dying daylight. "I was going to the Royal Society to read my paper on 'The Subjection of Woman in the Days of the Primitive Club.'"

"What a pity you didn't bring your clubs with you! People would have thought that you had become human and taken to golf. Now, kindly ring the bell for some tea. No, it's no use to press the top of it. It isn't an electric bell."

He shambled back to his chair. "To think of a great city like London not having electric bells everywhere!"

"Oh, you'll find enough electricity in most London belles. Tea, Warburton. And have some sent up to your mistress."

"It's disgracing one's manhood to be waited on by a striped-legged creature like that," growled the professor, "when he might be growing corn in Canada."

"We can't all grow corn—that would be too selfish. Some of us must take our share in the labor of eating it," said Mrs. Marjoribanks, settling herself just the most effective distance from the lamp. "Try the tea-cakes, professor. You'll be sorry for it afterward, but you'll enjoy the present moment."

"Who's a hunted thing?" he said, standing before the fireplace, and looking down on her, tea-cup in one hand, tea-cake in the other, and reverting to her original remark.

"I am."

"Who is hunting you?"

"A little more cream? Sugar? One lump? Yes, I thought so. Who is hunting me? You are."

"I'm not a hunting man," but he smiled. "And you're not a fox."

"What am I, then? There's generally at least one brush between us when we meet. It is really about time you paid me a genuine compliment, professor. Most of your compliments are such left-handed ones, they take my breath away. Now, tell me," she smiled radiantly up at him, "what am I? Be careful in your definition, or we shall quarrel again; and there is nothing so indecent as for a man to be hopelessly in the right when he quarrels with a woman. What am I? Swallow your tea-cake, and tell me."

"You're just a whimsy-whamsy woman, like all the others."

"That is untrue. Untrue! Fie on you! Fie on you!"

"How is it untrue?"

"I'll prove it to you. Tell me how many other women you have been to call on in the last six months. On your honor, not as a man, but as a professor."

"None. Do you think, with my lectures, I've the time to waste——?"

She smiled again.

"Well, you need not get cross. Doesn't that prove that I am not like the others, or you wouldn't have come here?"

"Do you think that's logic? Logic! Woman, woman, don't meddle with the higher things sacred to man."

"I don't think anything about it; and I've never yet found anything sacred to man—except his digestion. I can't help human nature being illogical. You scientists want method in everything, even in a—wife."

The professor jumped. "What has a wife"—he rolled the word round his

tongue with relish—"what has a wife to do with logic? How do you make that out? How——?"

"Take care! Take care! You'll upset your cup. Tell me why you are so nervous this afternoon. One would think you were dying to unburden yourself of a guilty secret."

"Your inconsequent way of flying from one thing to another is enough to make anybody jump. You haven't any premises."

"No, that's true enough, professor. They belong to Miss Wylde."

"What do?"

"These premises."

He paused grimly, tea-cake in hand. "Never mind these premises. I'll not stop to explain to a feather-brained creature like yourself. What do you think of Museum street?"

"I don't think of it. Why should I?"

"I want you to think of it."

"Why? why? why? Can't you remember that this isn't a thinking age!"

"Could you live in Museum street without half-a-dozen striped-legged things to wait on you?"

She leaned mirthfully forward.

"Really, professor, you are so painfully abrupt. Kindly let me see the size of your foot?"

"Do you think I want to kick you?" he burst out. "You are more than giving me the size of your tongue."

"N-no; but I have a pair of boots up-stairs, and I wanted to know whether they would fit you. They are fetish boots which have been in my room for years."

"His?" He glowered at her, fiercely. "Marjoribanks's? Don't tell me they're his!"

"Of course, they are. Do you think I would be so indelicate as to allow of any one else's being there? Professor, you know very little about women—very little indeed."

"But surely he's dead and gone to heaven?"

"He is dead—I have no information about the second part of your question. Let us hope for the best.

You professors are so inconsequent. Yes, that's the word—inconsequent!"

"You mean?"

"I mean that, if ever man qualified for heavenly joys, he must have done so on earth."

"And you are anxious to qualify in the same way so that you can share his ultimate bliss?"

"I didn't say that. No, I didn't say just that."

The professor's cautious habits once more reasserted themselves.

"Then what do you mean by singling me out for your—your scientific attentions?" Her pretty foot began to tap impatiently. She became serious; her flippancy dropped from her. "Men and women came into the world long before science."

"And they'll go out of it long before science, also. I'll tell you in a moment," he said, methodically taking a reel of cotton, a thimble and a cloth-covered button from his waistcoat pocket.

She gazed at him in amazement.

"What are these for? Thimble-rigging?"

He took off his coat. "You'll excuse my disrobing myself, but I'd like to try your skill as a housewife. Yon button's off."

"Oh, very well. Just ring the bell, please."

Warburton came in.

"Take this coat to the housekeeper's room," she said, "and tell Mrs. Jenkins to sew on that button. Then bring it back again."

The professor, in his shirt-sleeves, cut a somewhat undignified figure. His cuffs were so frayed!

"What do you mean by that?" he asked, quietly, when Warburton, who never permitted himself to be surprised at anything, had disappeared with the somewhat rusty coat.

"What do I mean? Oh, wait, wait, wait!"

Her little foot tapped more quickly than before.

After a somewhat trying interval of a few minutes, Warburton returned with the coat, and respectfully assisted

the professor into it. Then he withdrew, still without looking surprised. Nothing less than a rattlesnake bite could have disturbed his gravity.

"Would you mind ringing again?" Mrs. Marjoribanks asked.

The professor rang. His mind was beginning to reel. He seemed to have been ringing the bell for the last half-hour.

"Bring the professor's hat," commanded Mrs. Marjoribanks.

The blandly attentive Warburton brought it. Had she commanded him to fetch the body of the late Mr. Marjoribanks himself, he would have taken an omnibus to Kensal Green Cemetery, opened the family vault, and have brought it back without comment.

"Good-bye, professor," she said, when Warburton had once more retired.

"G-good-bye! What do you mean?"

"What do I mean?" She rose in indignant majesty. "I honored you. I thought you were a rough diamond. You are only a bear. You come to me as if I were for sale. You propose to buy me to—to sew on buttons! I will not be bought!"

"But I l-love you," he stammered.

"You do not! You love only yourself! You haven't said one tender word to me. All you have thought of is yourself. I—I—" Sobs choked her. She buried her face in her hands.

The professor was genuinely distressed. His hat fell on the floor; he put a timid hand upon her shoulder. "Dear woman, I beg your pardon. It was only a mask. You've sunshine enough in you to fill the whole of Museum street. I—I've been so worked up, I—I didn't know how to do it. I—I thought the button would lead up to it; that you would pity me. And you can't picture," he said, with deep feeling, "what it is to go to bed a buttonless man, to wake up a buttonless man, to know that others know you're a buttonless man. I thought we'd get on from buttons to the other thing in a few minutes—but you're a whirlwind, woman, a whirlwind!"

"I—I've never heard of a C-c-cupid in b-b-buttons."

He knelt down beside her.

"You're a beautiful whirlwind for all that, my dear," he whispered. "I'm not so old but I can see it. And I can't get on with my lectures for thinking of you. You come with your abominable jokes and quips and cranks, and I'm just silly about you. Silly! Me! Silly! I never thought to make such a concession to sentiment; but you're too much for me. Your fingers are far too pretty to roughen with sewing on my buttons."

Her sobs lessened, her foot ceased to tap the floor.

"Get on," she said; "get on, get on, get on."

"Get on with what, my dear?"

"Get on with what you are going to say. Quick! quick! quick! I—I didn't know you had such a musical voice, professor. It—it sounded quite nice when you called me 'my dear.'"

The professor, although altogether unaccustomed to the wiles of women, had the wit to put his arms round her and kiss her.

"I don't understand you," he said, fervently. "I doubt whether you understand yourself. But there's nothing else worth understanding if you won't explain it to me. Now I come to look into them, your eyes are cornflower blue."

She was amazed.

"You—you never found that out before?"

"You are such an unreasonable woman," said the professor, "and your logic is like that of a two-year-old babe—cry till you get what you want. Your eyes grow quite dark when you're angry. Your lips are very sweet."

"And you l-love me? Say it, say it, say it! Don't boggle, professor, but say it."

"I love you—to my sorrow," the professor admitted. "It is altogether unaccountable that an intellectual man like myself should spoil his lectures by falling in love; but if there are harsh, though cogent, reflections in my paper on 'The Subjection of Woman

in the Days of the Primitive Club,' I'll cut them all out for your sake, and cut my club, too, if you'll only marry me."

"That is very noble of you. And you will let me do just as I please?"

"As far as I think judicious," said the professor, firmly. He rang the bell again. "It's for the striped-legged creature—the thing that ought to grow corn instead of eating it."

"What do you want with him?"

"Perhaps you'll just be good enough to tell him to send your woman to fetch those boots of which you spoke."

She looked at him with admiration, and did as she was told.

Warburton, distinctly pained, went away, received the boots from Mrs. Marjoribanks's maid, and brought them gingerly into the room.

"I'll trouble you for yesterday's paper," said the professor.

Warburton brought it to him.

"I'll wrap them in this," said the professor; and the late Mr. Marjoribanks's boots disappeared from view.

"What are you going to do with them?" tremulously asked Mrs. Marjoribanks, for there was something in the professor's eye which awed her.

"They are good boots," said the professor, critically; "very good boots; but I don't think I am the man to wear them. There's a crossing-sweeper at the corner of Museum street who will be glad of a pair."

"But they'll never wear out," said the horrified Mrs. Marjoribanks. "You've no idea how strong they are."

"I'm thinking, if they're always round the corner where we can hear them clumping about, they'll check all references to the departed, and comparisons to the disadvantage of the living," said the professor, drily. "I've heard your late husband was a very accomplished man, and I'm not going to suffer from his surpassing excellencies. When the crossing-sweeper is wearing these boots, they will remind us that your late husband is investigating phenomena unknown to living mortals, and must not be disturbed by

any flippant allusions to his earthly moments."

She came to him on the hearth-rug, and the boots slipped to the floor. "I thought I was going to be master," she urged, with a dash of mischief in her eyes, "and you are already dictating to me in the most masterful manner. You've no idea how intensely satisfactory it is to give you the right to bully me."

"We'll just go on as we've begun," said the professor, picking up the boots. "A contentious woman is—indeed, when I look into your eyes, I don't rightly remember what a contentious woman is like. Woman, you've stolen two little bits of heaven's blue, and put them in your face for eyes."

She stopped his mouth with her slim fingers. "Did ever bear dance so prettily! Dance, professor, dance!"

The professor sat down, boots and all.

"If you'll do that again," he said, with inexpressible content, "I'm thinking the Royal Society can just wait for me till they're all blue in the face."

"What a masterful man you are!" she declared, throwing the manuscript of his lecture into a distant arm-chair.

"I am," said the professor, honestly believing that he was stating the truth.

VII

THE BITER BIT

As time went on, Crewe began to grow nervous, for he had tried several little surprises with the major, and, each time, had suffered more than had the object of them. He found that the mental strain of plotting and planning to give an air of naturalness to his designs affected his own health prejudicially. Besides, Wayne was always at his elbow with an embarrassing desire to be useful.

If the valet suspected anything, he kept his suspicions to himself, although, on more than one occasion, Crewe, bent upon nocturnal expeditions—one of these took the shape of a clock with

an alarm penetrating enough to waken the dead—found Wayne loitering about near the major's door in the dead of night. On being asked what he was doing there, Wayne pleaded toothache, and pointed to a huge bandage round his jaw. When Crewe did at length get the alarm safely into Graham's room, Wayne damaged the spring so that it would not work. It must have been Wayne, for no one else knew anything about it. On another occasion, Crewe had put materials into the major's fireplace to choke him out of sleep, and make him think that the house was on fire. Wayne, after a casual glance at the fireplace, took away the smoldering mass of wood shavings and chemicals in a pail of water long before they were timed to half stifle the major with their sulphurous fumes. Wayne was ubiquitous, for he always appeared on the scene just in time to frustrate Crewe's most ambitious and carefully planned attempts to hurry Graham out of existence.

But, one morning, Crewe and the major went out for a stroll, and when they reached the little island in the middle of the road just at the Criterion end of Piccadilly, it seemed to Crewe that his opportunity had come at last. He suddenly pushed heavily against the major as if he were about to faint. The major, who was a man of resource, saved himself from falling under the wheels of an approaching omnibus by rolling rapidly into the gutter, from the gutter to the pavement, and from the pavement into the arms of a policeman, who picked him up and recommended him to go home and have a bath, as the sticky slime of Piccadilly never relaxed its hold. "You gents did ought to be more careful, sir," he said. "There's your friend hanging over the post as if he's going to faint." And he dashed under the nose of a cab-horse just in time to pull Crewe back into safety on the island which divided the traffic and made a haven for timorous dames intent on shopping.

The major stayed his wrath with an

effort, and helped the policeman drag the half-lifeless Crewe into a chemist's shop. In spite of their united efforts, it took some time to bring Crewe round. When he did open his eyes, he shivered.

"Is he—dead?" he asked, sitting up and looking wildly about him. "Is he dead, policeman?"

"Dead! Not much, sir!" said the policeman, who was still hovering round. "But it was a narrow shave for both you gents. If you wants to go in for larks like that, choose a quieter place than Piccadilly Circus, gentlemen. Thank 'ee, sir." His expression changed as the major slipped half a sovereign into his hand, and, a king of blue, he once more resumed his lordly sway over the traffic.

The major put Crewe in a cab, and told the driver to take him home. Curiously enough, Crewe made no objection to going home. He dreaded to meet the major's eye as he slouched into the cab.

The major hurried on to his tailor's, pondering deeply. The incident would have annoyed him a great deal more had he not remembered that there was another suit waiting for him there. With the aid of an assistant, he speedily disencumbered himself of his stained clothes, and put on the new ones. Then, he sent out for a fresh hat, donned his new overcoat, and went off to meet Veronica as if nothing had happened. They were to lunch at the Carlton, and then "do" picture galleries.

He found Veronica on the threshold of the Carlton. There was a little frown upon her brow—she was not accustomed to wait for any one. But the major looked so happy when he caught sight of her that she forgave him on the spot.

"What made you so late? I thought all military men were punctual." She smiled, and the frown disappeared.

"Army men are never late," said the major. "Do you think I'd be a minute late if I could help it?"

"No," said Veronica, softly. "I only wanted to be tyrannical. But

you were so good-tempered about it that I can't even pretend to be cross. What really kept you? Couldn't you get rid of Algy?"

"Oh, yes, I've got rid of him easily enough," the major declared, grimly. "It was a question who should get rid of the other, but I won, hands down, this time. I'll tell you all about it presently. I had to get my boots cleaned and buy some fresh gloves and a new hat."

It was not, however, until after luncheon, when the major had taken her away to the classic solitude of the National Gallery for the ostensible purpose of looking at old masters, that he drew Veronica into a corner and told her what had happened. "I don't know what's the matter with Crewe," he concluded. "He's always, either by accident or by design, trying to scare me, and frightening himself much the worse of the two. He's got all my symptoms, only worse," he incautiously added. "He'll go off, too, if he isn't careful."

Veronica started. Here, then, was the clue to the mystery.

"All the Crewes have weak hearts; nothing else ever ails them. Isn't your heart sound?" she asked, carelessly, and affected to be absorbed in the somewhat rubicund nose of an old master.

"Ah! she doesn't suspect or she wouldn't be so indifferent about it," thought the major. "We'll be happy for a few hours, at any rate."

Veronica repeated her question.

"I don't think Crewe's is," the major admitted. "Let us go and look at Tucker's 'Wind, Steam and Rain,' or whatever they call it. From what I remember of it, it's the crockiest old engine going."

But Veronica was not interested in "crocky" old engines just then. One of those inspirations that come so often to women and so rarely to men, had flashed upon her.

"This reason which is parting us, has something to do with yourself—your health?" she suddenly asked the major, who, caught unawares, had no time to parry the thrust.

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"Yes, yes," he said, hurriedly; "only, I don't want to talk about it. Let us be happy to-day. Won't you believe it is better that I shouldn't?"

"Oh, very well," she said, carelessly, as if the subject were not worth discussion. "The Cavershams have gone to live in Harley street. Edith says it isn't cheerful. I wonder whether they are anywhere near your friend, Harcourt. By the way, what is his number?"

He told her the number quite unsuspiciously, and, half an hour later, pleading a headache, Veronica said she would go home.

"Of course I'll see you back," he suggested, hailing a hansom.

"Not this afternoon, if you don't mind," she said, seeing the look of disappointment on his face. "Remember, you're going to the theatre with Algy to-night. Go back and get a rest. You've earned a rest after all that hard work in South Africa. Come to see me to-morrow."

She looked bewitchingly lovely, as she smiled at him from the depths of the hansom.

When the cab was half-way home, Veronica suddenly stopped it, and told the man to drive her to Harley street.

"Yes," the pretty maid said, in answer to her uncompromising ring, "Dr. Harcourt is in. Have you an appointment?"

No, Veronica had not an appointment, but, if Dr. Harcourt could spare her a few minutes, she wanted to see him. Then, as an afterthought, she handed the pretty maid a spare card of the major's, which she had carefully taken out of some flowers he had sent her.

The effect was magical, for Dr. Harcourt, without waiting to be formal, himself appeared in the waiting-room. He looked anxious and worried.

"So glad to meet you, Miss Wylde. Perhaps you can give me news of Graham. Only yesterday, I heard of his return from the earl. They were all wondering why he doesn't go down to Eske again, instead of spending most of his time in town. Anything wrong

with him? He might have dropped in to see me. We're old school and college chums, you know."

"But he has been to see you. He told me so only last week," said Veronica. "You were out of town on that day."

"Out of town!" The doctor started. "Miss Wylde, you don't mean to say that he looked me up on that particular day?"

"Of course I do. Why shouldn't he? I remember his telling me how disappointed he was not to find you at home."

"What on earth possessed him to come on that day, when he might have chosen any other! Does he—does he seem to have anything on his mind? Is he worried at all?" asked Harcourt, abruptly.

"Why, doctor, you must be a magician! That is just what I came to see you about. He won't tell me what is the matter with him, and the consequences may be very serious to both of us."

The doctor strode irresolutely up and down the room.

"Miss Wylde, I am sure I can trust you. I've got into a horrible hole, too. Had I remained away another day, my practice would have been ruined."

"Why? What do you mean?"

"Powerscourt promised to look after my patients for me. His note, in reply to mine asking him to take charge of my work, was coherent enough. In spite of his manner not giving him away, he'd gone off his head from overwork, and no one found it out till he'd got back home from seeing my patients. He wasn't even sane enough to make coherent notes about them."

"But why should that ruin you?"

"He has neglected everything for hypnotism, and that finished him. Two of my patients have been suffering from certain things which he suggested to them. In both cases, the suggestion was utterly baseless. The only way was to explain to poor Powerscourt in one of his lucid intervals what he had done, and to get him to

undo the mischief. Two women fancied they had heart-dis——"

"Heart-disease! That explains it all!" Veronica gave a little cry of delight. "Now, I know why Geo—the major, is so strange in his manner."

"I don't wonder he's strange in his manner, if he fancies he's got heart disease. I'd a letter from him a few days before he sailed for home, saying how absolutely well he felt—wound healing up, not an ache or strain or anything, and that it was rather a fraud for him to get leave when there still remained so much to be done. I expect he dropped in to see me, and poor, crazy Powerscourt thought he was a patient." Harcourt held up his professionally white hands in despair. "What have I done, after all these years of hard work, to be overwhelmed like this! Fortunately, I have put everything else right. Graham's a brave man, but it will scare him out of his wits if he thinks I've heard he's ill and am worrying about him. Of course, he doesn't know anything about Powerscourt going mad. Was there ever such a tragedy of errors?"

Veronica gazed at him helplessly. Here was a fresh complication. "What are we to do? How are we to help the major?"

Harcourt stopped to consider. "We can't help him. Powerscourt is the only man to do that. If Graham fancies he has heart-disease, and gets one violent shock after another, there's no reason why, in time, he shouldn't really have heart-disease."

Veronica turned white.

"Suppose the major told any one of this, and the person he told wants to get him out of the way. If this person could contrive a series of apparently accidental shocks—little unpremeditated things—things which would not bring him under suspicion—would not a man cold-blooded enough, and wicked enough, gradually accomplish his aim?"

"Of course he would. He would only have to keep on devising shock after shock. In time, he would worry his man to death."

Veronica hastily explained what Crewe had done only that very morning. "But," she added, "it apparently had more effect on him than on the major. My cousin's people all have weak hearts."

Harcourt smiled, grimly.

"If your cousin isn't careful, he'll get himself into difficulties. You see, if he has heart-disease and doesn't know it, he must bear all the strain of it and the additional strain of his murderous designs upon Graham. Get Graham away from him without delay. If you will ask him to call here at three to-morrow afternoon, I'll have Powerscourt undo his work. He's very cranky and unreliable, and I shall have to coax him a bit."

Veronica thanked Harcourt, warmly. Now she knew the horrible shadow which clouded Graham's life, she felt sure of her ability to remove it. Why had he not told her about it before? And how much he must have suffered in silence at Crewe's unscrupulous hands! When she thought of Crewe, she shuddered. Was there ever so cold-blooded and unprincipled a murderer in the world? He deserved hanging as high as Haman. Even at that very moment, exasperated by his repeated failures, he might be plotting some fresh scheme against Graham's life.

As she dressed for dinner, she wondered whether she ought not to send Graham a telegram asking him to come to her. Then, she remembered that the two men were going to a theatre and that nothing much could happen there. No, she must not say anything until to-morrow.

Hastily scribbling a note to Graham reminding him to lunch with her and Mrs. Marjoribanks on the morrow, Veronica went to dinner. To-morrow seemed such a long way off!

VIII

WAYNE AVENGES HIMSELF

CREWE came softly into his bedroom, and, hurriedly turning up the

light, placed a little box on the dressing-table. He moved about for a minute or two, then paused before the glass. "The strain's getting too much for me—the major's tougher than I thought," he murmured. "By Jove, I *am* blue about the gills. Where's that fool, Wayne? I'll make sure he isn't about. Wayne, where are you?"

Wayne did not answer, although the door of the major's room happened to be ajar, and he heard perfectly. Muttering an oath, Crewe, who seemed to be very much shaken, went downstairs into his sitting-room to get a brandy-and-soda. Somehow, he had taken a good many brandy-and-sodas lately.

"Now's my chance," thought Wayne. "Wonder what he's got in the box? It seems to be some new dodge to upset the major."

He heard the soda-water hiss into the tumbler, and hurriedly slipped upstairs. "Here I am, sir, here I am," he called out. In a second, he opened the box, and saw that it contained three big percussion-caps. He slipped the caps into his waistcoat pocket, then hurriedly took them out again, and placed them in a line close together on the waxed floor, just by the leg of the dressing-table. When Crewe entered the room, Wayne was busily laying out his evening clothes, and putting the studs into a shirt.

Crewe snatched up the box from the dressing-table, and hastily slipped it into his overcoat pocket. His hand shook as he did so.

"Hang that coat up, you good-for-nothing scoundrel," he said to Wayne. "You're always loafing about somewhere else when you're wanted. Help me off with my things. Now shave me, and be quick about it!"

Wayne went out, came back with hot water, and shaved him without a word.

"What are you stopping for?" suddenly asked Crewe. "Been drinking? You've a face like a nightmare. Turn the gas up." He laughed almost hysterically at the reflection of Wayne's pasty face in the glass. "You're no

beauty, Wayne. If I'd a face like that, I'd drown myself. Look sharp."

"Yes, sir. Can't 'elp my face, sir. Mother gave it me." Wayne edged Crewe's chair a little nearer to the dressing-table. "There's such 'orrible noises at night, sir. I can't stand them, can you? I wake up in a fright, and— and see things—hear people walking about, sir. But the noises is the worst."

"Noises! What noises? Pooh, you're dreaming! What d'you mean?"

"All sorts of noises, sir. Things happening unexpected-like." Wayne carefully wiped the razor, and put it in its case. "If you'd kindly pay me the two years' wages due to me, sir, and let me go, I'd take it as a favor. Beggin' your pardon, sir, it's time we parted—parted to-night."

"Are you mad, Wayne? Sure you haven't been at the brandy-bottle down-stairs?"

"Mad, sir? No, sir. Brandy-bottle? No, sir. I'm no more mad than you are, sir. Only, I've made up my mind we're going to part to-night."

"You impertinent scoundrel! What d'you mean?"

"Very sorry, sir. I didn't mean to be rude, sir, but, for God's sake, pay me my wages and let me go! It'll be better for both of us, sir!—better for both of us."

His subdued excitement infected Crewe, who went ghastly blue and white about the face. "Don't worry me any more, you scoundrel," he spluttered. "Don't you see I'm not fit to be worried?"

"Ah, then, you haven't slept neither, sir, lately?" asked Wayne, eagerly.

"Slept? Of course I haven't slept! I'm ill—dreadfully ill. I don't know why, but I feel nearly dead. Having an aggravating brute like you about, always whining for money he hasn't earned, doesn't make me any better. You'll repent it some day, Wayne, when I come into the major's money and kick you out, and you've only the workhouse to go to."

Wayne paused, powder-puff in hand. "Yes, sir, dessay I shall, sir.

I suppose you've never done anything you're sorry for now, sir?"

"I? Of course not! What put that into your thick head? Give me my watch."

"Oh, I—I didn't know, sir. I—I only thought people do go off sudden sometimes, when they least expect it, and it's well to be prepared."

"What are you driving at?" Crewe looked into the glass, and Wayne's face seemed to suggest a new idea to him. "I say, Wayne, if you'll do something for me, I'll pay you your wages in a fortnight."

"Yes, sir. I'd do a good deal to get my wages in a fortnight. I've a starving old mo——"

"Hang your mother! Now, listen to me."

"Yes, sir."

"You know how ill the major is?"

"Yes, sir."

"The doctors say he has heart-disease. His life is no good to him. He may go off at any moment."

"Yes, sir."

"Any sudden shock might be fatal to him."

"Yes, sir."

"You can see for yourself how the poor fellow suffers."

"Yes, sir."

"He can't really enjoy life. Don't you think it would be a kindness to put him out of his misery?"

"H-how, sir?"

"How? Oh, there are dozens of ways. Now, my tie—that's it. If anything happened to the major, I should come in for most of his money."

"Yes, sir."

"D'you know how much money I have at the present moment?"

"No, sir."

"Ah, well, just turn out my trousers pocket. How much?"

"Seven and six, sir."

"Looks bad for your wages, Wayne, doesn't it? Two years' arrears come to more than that."

"Yes, sir."

"Yes. Now polish my nails—that left little finger nail isn't all it should be. You ought to be more careful

how you turn me out. What were we talking about?"

"Wages, sir."

"Oh, yes, so we were. The major's sure to be a bit unstrung with the excitement when we come back from the theatre to-night, Wayne."

"Yes, sir."

"And if, by any chance, you could give him a sudden shock—something totally unexpected—a really good one—it might be fatal to him."

"Yes, sir."

"Well?"

"Well, sir?"

"What are you waiting for?"

"You, sir."

"What do you want me to do?"

"Put it into writing. Make me an offer, sir."

Crewe half-wheeled round. "D'you think I'm such a fool as to put my neck in your power, Wayne?"

"No, sir."

"Then don't you see what an absurd thing you are asking me to do?"

"No, sir. If I might be so bold, sir, just write on a slip of paper you owe me five hundred pounds."

"Owe you five hundred pounds! What for?"

"For money lent and wages, sir."

"Don't you trust me, Wayne? Can't you leave the amount to my honor?"

Even at such a moment Crewe could not play fair.

If Wayne had any lingering compunction in his mind, Crewe's inconceivable meanness about the blood money for doing away with the major confirmed him in the execution of his desperate project. He went downstairs, swallowed a mouthful of brandy neat, and came back with a half-sheet of note-paper and pen and ink.

"If you wouldn't mind just writing it down, sir; it's more satisfactory, sir."

"Oh, very well. What do you want me to say?"

"This is to certify that I owe my faithful servant, Samuel Wayne, for wages and money lent by him to me—" Wayne paused.

"Go on," said Crewe, writing labo-

riously; "—for wages and money lent by him to me."

"For wages and money lent by him to me, the sum of five hundred pounds."

"No, I'm hanged if I do! Five hundred pounds! You'll only drink it, Wayne, or get married."

"Five hundred pounds," repeated Wayne, inexorably. "It's not much to you, sir; it's a lot to me. I'm not going to lose my soul for less. It's pretty cheap, as souls go nowadays."

"Oh, very well, you bloodsucker," Crewe grumbled. "You value your soul at a higher rate than I do. Five hun—! Suppose I don't sign this precious paper? What then?"

"What then, sir?"

Crewe looked up, pen in hand.

"Yes, what then? Don't stand there like a parrot! Suppose I refuse to be blackmailed, what then?"

"Then I split, sir, that's all."

"Oh-h! You split! Very well, I'll sign it. You don't suppose any one would believe your story?"

"Miss Veronica would," said Wayne, carefully blotting the paper, and gradually edging nearer the dressing-table.

"Miss Veronica would! So that's your little game? You're a craftier scoundrel than I thought you were."

"Yes, sir. There's more scoundrels than me in the world, sir." Wayne put the paper in his pocket. "What are my instructions, sir?"

"Get that box out of my coat. You'll find three big percussion-caps in it. Put them in your pocket, and burn the box. I told the gunsmith I wanted those caps specially charged to frighten cats. He says they'll make a good noise."

"Yes, sir."

Wayne pretended to put the caps in his pocket.

"Well, all you have to do when we return from the theatre to-night is to stand at the head of the staircase there as the major comes up, and explode the caps. You understand? Tread on them or do it any way you like; only, make sure they explode."

"Yes, sir. I understand, sir."

"And you'll explode the caps? You

promise? Here, swear it on this Bible. I've never found a use for it before. Besides, I don't trust you and your promises."

"I'll explode the caps, sir. I swear it."

Wayne kissed the Bible with unction.

"You're quite clear?" Crewe gasped, the beads of perspiration standing on his forehead. "After all, you're a handy scoundrel, Wayne. I'd better have let you tackle this affair in the beginning."

"Quite made up your mind, sir?"

Wayne asked, with a demoniacal grin on his face. "You're not going to let the major off?"

"Let him off, curse him! What for?"

"If I might be allowed to mention it, sir, he's spent a lot of money on you, one time and another. Couldn't you—couldn't you give him a chance?"

"Don't be impertinent. Just give me your arm, and help me to the bed. I'll lie down for a few minutes. I want to be quiet. I feel horribly ill to-night; but it will pass off directly."

"Noises and excitements don't seem to agree with you, sir," said Wayne, playing with his victim. "D'you ever say a prayer, sir? Anything like 'Our Father which art in 'eaven,' sir?"

"Say a prayer, you fool! What should I pray about? Con—! Oh! Oh-h-h-h! What are you do—do—?"

Wayne seized Crewe by the coat, and flung him upon the bed, then stamped his left foot hard on the caps. They went off with a bang which made Crewe leap to the floor.

"Way—Wayne, I'm dying! You scoundrel! You—you've kill—killed—the wrong—!" He fell back, a limp heap, upon the bed.

Wayne crept to the top of the stairs. Apparently, no one had heard the explosion. Noiselessly opening the window to allow the fumes to escape, he flung the exploded caps far into the night, hurried back to the room, arranged Crewe's body on the bed, turned down the light, and put his hat and coat on a chair, with one theatre ticket beside them. Then, he shut the win-

dow, and went down-stairs just in time to open the door to the major.

"Your master in yet?" asked the major.

"Yes, sir," said Wayne, quietly.

"He's not feeling very well to-night, and thought he'd lie down a bit. He doesn't want to be disturbed. If you go on to the theatre, he'll try to join you later. Here's your ticket, sir."

"Oh, thanks." The major was glad to avoid a tête-à-tête dinner with Crewe. "Don't disturb him. I'll dine out when I've dressed."

Wayne valeted the major with more than his usual skill. "You're an uncommonly handy man," said the major. "Just look to me for your wages, in future." He glanced at Wayne's threadbare coat and cracked shoes. "I fancy they're not paid with any startling regularity."

"Thank you, sir, but I'd rather not say, sir."

"That's right. Don't give your master away. Sometimes, I fancy he's a bit rough with you, Wayne. My gloves? Thanks."

"No, sir. No, sir. Only his way. We're the best of friends, sir, best of friends. Lately, we—we understand one another better, sir."

"That's right, that's right. My hat? Now, I'll be off. You needn't sit up for me, Wayne. Let me have your key."

"Key, sir? Yes, sir. You're not angry with me, sir?"

"Angry! Haven't I just said you're a treasure, Wayne?"

"I was afraid—about Mr. Crewe's owing me money, sir."

"Oh, don't you worry yourself. I'll put that right." And the major went out.

Wayne looked thoughtfully after the major, then went back and folded up his clothes. "I've done him and Miss Veronica a good turn. God knows I've been driven to it! But no one else knows. Now, I'll give the alarm. It's about time."

He moistened his dry lips with his tongue, leisurely went up-stairs, then came running down to the kitchen

with well-simulated terror. "Help! help!" he gasped; "help!"

"What's the matter, Mr. Wayne?" asked the cook.

"Ma-master! master!" gasped Wayne. "He—he's ill. Go up to him, cook, while I run for a doctor."

He fetched the nearest doctor, who hastily examined the dead man. "Heart-disease! Anything of the sort in his family?" he asked, sharply, turning to Wayne.

"Yes, sir. Mother's side," said Wayne. His voice quivered artistically. "I've been his servant a good many years, sir."

"Poor fellow! poor fellow! Keep cool, keep cool," said the doctor. "You've done all you could."

"Yes, sir," said Wayne, sorrowfully. "D'you think, sir, he knows now all I've done for him?"

The doctor looked thoughtfully at the dead body. "I shouldn't be surprised; I shouldn't be surprised. His face hasn't even yet lost the terror of death. Death's an awful thing, man—an awful thing."

"Yes, sir," said Wayne. "'In the midst of life we are in death,' sir. That's what makes it so sudden, sir," and he turned aside to conceal his emotion.

IX

THE BURDEN FALLS

It was not until nearly a week after Crewe's death that the projected meeting between Powerscourt and the major took place.

There had been many formalities—an inquest, a hurried funeral. The major, as a matter of course, made a point of attending his unworthy protégé to the grave, although the shock caused by Crewe's sudden taking off had affected him so seriously that he felt almost too weak and ill to move. Deep down in his heart, there had lurked the possibility of reclaiming Crewe, of showing him the criminal folly and ingratitude of his proposed

crime as well as its uselessness. Now, it was too late, and, with a feeling of relief, he turned from the grave-side in company with Wayne, who remained respectfully staring at the coffin until the last moment. Then, a clod of earth fell with a thud on the polished oak casket, and Wayne almost instantly recovered himself.

"Come inside with me," said the major, motioning Wayne to enter the same mourning-coach. "I want to talk to you."

Wayne respectfully objected that such a proceeding was unseemly. Miss Wylde's carriage had followed the hearse, it was empty—he would ride on the box beside the coachman.

Graham made him get in.

"I want to know if you'll transfer yourself to me," he said, kindly. "You're looking a bit pale and over-worked, Wayne."

Wayne, quietly holding his hat on his knee, touched his tow-colored hair with his forefinger, respectfully. "If you don't mind, sir, thank you very much, but I've thought it over, and I'd like to emigrate, sir, with—with mother. Mother's looking forward to foreign travel, sir."

"Emigrate!" The major was disappointed. Then his face grew kinder. "I understand, Wayne. You've had a pretty trying time, and you want a change. That's it, isn't it?"

"Yes, sir, if you please, sir. Mother wants to see the world, though she's nearly sixty. I couldn't stand London any longer, sir, after—after what has happened. I—I wouldn't feel easy in my mind."

"Well, I'm sorry—very sorry. How much did your master owe you?"

Wayne produced his scrap of paper. "Five hundred, sir. All my savings and scrapings together."

"We'll call it a thousand. Then you and your mother will be more comfortable. You'd rather have the money than an annuity?"

"If you please, sir. It will give us a start, sir. I'd like to let mother travel in style, sir."

Wayne remained silent for a mo-

ment. Then he cleared his throat with a nervous, deprecating movement. "Of course, mother wouldn't think of my leaving you, sir, till you're all right again."

"Thank you. If that's the case, you needn't make your arrangements in a hurry, for I'm afraid I never shall be all right again. Miss Wylde wants me to go to Harcourt to-morrow at three. I dare say she's clinging to the belief that there may be some hope for me. Wayne, I've a good mind to emigrate, too, and do some ranching in the Northwest. Can you ride?"

"Ride, sir? Yes, sir. Mother wants to see me on a horse again. It 'minds her of father. I was in a training stable till I got too heavy. That's where they broke my nerve."

"Then, if I don't speedily improve, we'll all go together. There's some good ranch land to be had in the Northwest territories."

"Yes, sir."

Wayne relapsed into silence. He could not explain to Graham how he wanted to get away from everything which reminded him of his servitude to Crewe. The racing-stable had "broken his nerve" in the beginning; Crewe's tyranny had long since completed the wreck.

The ebony steeds of death tossed their long manes, and started off at a pompous trot. Both Wayne and the major remained buried in gloomy reflections. The major desired to live and marry Veronica. Wayne wanted to get away from England and begin his life anew. He looked upon himself as an executioner rather than a murderer. Had he not, in all probability, saved the major's life by his timely intervention?

He dressed the major very carefully for his interview with Harcourt on the following afternoon, and saw that he had a good luncheon and a half-bottle of champagne. "It's nervous work facing doctors, sir," he suggested. "You drink this and you won't feel it nearly so much."

The major was touched and amused, but he drank the champagne. "Dutch

courage, Wayne," he said, gravely; "Dutch courage—but I'm not afraid for myself."

Veronica and Mrs. Marjoribanks called for him at a quarter to three, and the swift bays dashed down Harley street as if they were going to a wedding. Veronica looked pale and anxious.

"What are you going to do with me?" the major asked, as the carriage stopped at Harcourt's door.

"Cure you," she said, with a lovely smile. She was afraid to tell him the truth, lest the shock should be too much for him. Harcourt had explained to her that he would have Powerscourt in attendance. Powerscourt was now hopelessly mad, with momentary intervals of sanity. Veronica trusted to one of these intervals, and hoped to make Powerscourt understand what was required of him.

The little, dark doctor sat at the same table, his tablets by his side. A tall, thin man stood close behind him, greatly to Powerscourt's annoyance. He was, if anything, more curt than ever, and his eyes darkened with sudden dislike when he saw the major. "Ah, yes," he mused, "why didn't you come in by yourself without bringing a crowd of your relations to stare at me? You've done as I told you?"

The major, annoyed by his offensive manner, swung curtly on his heel. Harcourt bent over, and whispered something to Powerscourt, who gravely shook his head. "Very sorry to disoblige you, my dear Harcourt," he said, sternly, "but it is most irregular—most unprofessional. I dislike the fellow too much."

"But you'll get me out of a scrape," pleaded Harcourt. "My dear Powerscourt, won't you do it to oblige me?"

"No, no, call the next case. Can't be done," said Powerscourt, decidedly. "Take him away. Whose turn is it now? Where are my notes?"

The quiet man in black bent down to Powerscourt, and whispered something in his ear. Powerscourt shrank from him in affright; his tablets fell to

the ground. "No supper! This is cruel—unworthy. Harcourt, by what right does this bully follow me about when I am attending to my most important cases?"

"You shall have a magnificent supper if you'll only put this man right," whispered Harcourt. "He's an old friend of mine. Do, there's a good fellow."

"No, no! Can't do it!" Powerscourt shook his large head resolutely. "I dislike the man. What did I convey to him by hypnotic suggestion? It isn't on my notes."

A sudden comprehension gleamed in Graham's eyes. He controlled himself by a mighty effort, and came nearer to the table.

"Keep back, sir, keep back!" shouted Powerscourt. "Don't you know that you are robbing me of my supper?"

Graham felt strongly inclined to knock him down. He saw that the man was mad, and it irritated him to think that the others should not see it, too. Why had they brought him there? He clenched his hands resolutely, and turned to Veronica. "Let us get out of this. I don't see any object in staying here," he said, sternly. "This fellow's——"

"Hush! hush!" Veronica raised a warning finger. The next moment, she glided round the table, and found Powerscourt bowing politely to Mrs. Marjoribanks.

"I think you are the next on my list," the poor fellow said, politely, and without a trace of bad temper. "I shall be charmed to attend to you. You're one of the prettiest patients I've had for years."

"Won't you attend to me first?" suggested Veronica. "I have come to ask you to do me a great favor, Dr. Powerscourt."

Powerscourt, in this new excitement, had already forgotten Graham. "Certainly, my dear madam, certainly. Doctors do not often have a chance of ministering to such loveliness." He bowed to her, impressively. "You were asking me?"

"Oh, just a trifle. Perhaps it doesn't really matter, and I am taking up too much of your valuable time."

Veronica smiled down upon him to hide the terror in her eyes.

"My dear madam! Too much of my time? Not at all! not at all! Nay, nay, I insist. Tell me at once."

"But I really do not like to trouble you." Veronica turned half aside.

Powerscourt sprang to his feet. "My dear madam, what have I done that you should treat me thus unkindly? Whatever it is, I promise you. You are excited, troubled. No one ever asked a favor of me in such circumstances, and asked in vain."

Veronica sat down beside him.

"You are so good," she said, softly. "You are quite sure you will do what I want? You promise me?"

"Anything, my dear madam! Anything! Only tell me what it is you want me to do. It isn't"—he looked at her, wistfully—"it isn't to give up my supper? You don't want my supper?"

"Certainly not, doctor; certainly not. You have been so busy lately that you may have forgotten that rather sulky man in the corner. You conveyed to him by means of hypnotic suggestion that he was suffering from heart-disease, although he was quite well at the time."

Powerscourt chuckled horribly.

"So I did, so I did. Hope he's got it by this time. Serve him right."

"He's suffering very much."

"Glad of it, my dear lady, glad of it. Shall I make him worse?"

"No, no! Please make him well again. He—he's so proud of it—so conceited since you have done him the honor to experiment on him. He thinks you can't make him well again, even if you try."

"Thinks that! Conceited puppy!" Powerscourt sprang to his feet. "Takes it in that way, does he! Here, you, sir! Turn round!"

"Turn round—for my sake," Veronica implored Graham, almost under her breath.

With a strong effort, Graham curbed his temper, and faced the little mad doctor. "So, you think, sir," said the latter, furiously, "that I do you the honor to experiment with you just for your own pleasure! Don't answer me, sir! There! there! Now, have you heart-disease? Don't dare to tell me that you have, because you haven't!" Powerscourt made a few strange movements with his hands, and Graham's burden fell from him.

Veronica put her hand on Powerscourt's arm. "How clever you are! How clever you are, doctor!"

Over his head, she made frantic signs to Graham to get out of the room.

Half-dazed, Graham found himself standing outside the door. Harcourt joined him in a moment.

"Your hat? Here it is. Come with me, old man."

He dragged Graham down the steps, and opened the carriage door. "Home!" he almost shouted to the coachman.

And before Graham quite realized what had happened, he was entering Veronica's house, without a trace of disease about him.

The carriage dashed back to Harley street for Veronica and Mrs. Marjoribanks. When it returned with them, Mrs. Marjoribanks gave a little gasp of despair.

"There's the professor's hat," she said. "I know it by the shabby brim. Besides, it hasn't been brushed for the last six weeks. He'll never forgive me if I keep him waiting. Where is the professor, Warburton?"

"In the library, madam."

"W-what's he doing, Warburton?"

"Saying things to the furniture, madam."

"What sort of things?" asked Mrs. Marjoribanks, anxiously.

"Hunpronounceable things, madam," said Warburton, stiffly. But Mrs. Marjoribanks was already halfway to the library door, leaving Veronica and Graham regarding each other with shining eyes.

Veronica turned to Warburton.

"Tea—in the drawing-room—and the library."

The major followed her up the broad staircase, into the drawing-room. She fell into his arms.

The discreet Warburton was an hour late with tea. When the major at length tore himself away from Veronica, he left a five-pound note in Warburton's itching palm.

"Ah, there's nothink like the harmy! The harmy always wins. If I'd known he was going to do that," said Warburton, looking after the major with profound admiration and respect, "I wouldn't have given them any tea at all—that might have brought me in a tenner."

He went up-stairs to the drawing-room on pretense of removing the tea things.

"I beg your pardon, madam—as a hold servant, may I take the liberty?"

"Yes, Warburton, what is it?"

"The servants' 'all is anxious about you and the major, madam; and he's just given me this. It—it seems a homen, madam."

Veronica produced a dainty purse.

"Warburton, you have been with me since I was a child. Your discretion has always seemed to me stronger than your powers of pronouncing the English language."

"Yes, madam? If I——"

"You were an hour late with tea just now—a thing which has never happened before."

"Under the circumstances, madam——"

"Will you kindly hold out your other hand?"

"Yes, madam."

Veronica put another five-pound note into his hand.

Warburton bowed profoundly; his powdered hair almost touched his toes.

"Ham I to hannounce the hevent in the servants' 'all, madam? If I may be hallowed to make the remark, madam, they like the major."

"If—you—please, Warburton. I—I like him, too."

Left alone, Veronica listened to the babble of voices below. Then she

walked slowly across the room, picked up Huntingtower's portrait, and pressed it to her lips.

"You prayed for my happiness—I am happy—so happy—now! Your mother has forgiven me for sending

you to your death. Do you, too, forgive me?"

The dead lad's eyes smiled into hers. Veronica prayed.

It seemed to her such a beautiful world in which to live and love!



AT MOONRISE

PALE faces looked up at me, out of the eve, like flowers;

Pale hands reached down to me, out of the dusk, like stars,
As over the hills, robed on with twilight, the Hours,
The Day's last Hours, departed, and the Night put up her bars.

Pale fingers beckoned me on, pale fingers, like starlit mist;

Dim voices called to me, dim as the wind's dim rune,
As up from the trees, like a nymph from the amethyst
Of her waters, as silver as foam, rose the round, white breast of the moon.

And I followed the pearly waving and beckon of hands,

The luring glitter and dancing glimmer of feet,
And the syllabled whisper of silence, that summoned to lands
Remoter than legend or faëry, where Myth and Tradition meet.

And I came to a place where the shadow of ancient Night

Brooded o'er ruins, far wilder than castles of dreams,
Fantastic, a mansion of phantoms, where, wandering white,
I met with a shadowy Presence whose voice I had followed, it seems.

And the ivy swayed in the wind, and the moonlight laid,

Like a ghostly benediction, a finger on
The Presence there, from whose eyes the darkness rayed,
The Presence I knew for one I had known in the years long gone.

And she looked in my face, and kissed me on brow and on cheek,

Murmured my name, and wistfully smiled in my eyes,
And the tears rose up in my heart that was wild and weak,
And my bosom seemed bursting with yearning, and my soul with sighs.

And there 'mid the ruins we sat. . . . Oh, strange were the words that she said!—

Secret and sad and strange; but stranger the looks that she gave,
For her voice was the voice of a joy, of a joy that was dead,
And her face was the face of a hope, of a hope deep down in its grave.

MADISON CAWEIN.

THE JOY

THE joy is in the doing,
 Not the deed that's done;
 The swift and glad pursuing,
 Not the goal that's won.

The joy is in the seeing,
 Not in what we see;
 The ecstasy of vision,
 Far and clear and free!

The joy is in the singing,
 Whether heard or no;
 The poet's wild, sweet rapture,
 And song's divinest flow!

The joy is in the being—
 Joy of life and breath;
 Joy of a soul triumphant,
 Conqueror of death!

Is there a flaw in the marble?
 Sculptor, do your best;
 The joy is in the endeavor—
 Leave to God the rest!

JULIA C. R. DORR.



THE WAY IT GOES

MUSINGTON—Ah, yes! you never really know a man until he owes you a debt, either social, political or financial.

GRIMSHAW—And, as a rule, when he does, you are never able to get near enough to him to recognize him, let alone know him.



IT LINGERED WITH HIM

SHE—Mrs. Bryson tells me that she married her husband ten years ago.

HE—Truly remarkable. And the poor fellow still has a surprised look.

THE WOOD OF YDREN

By Zona Gale

THOUGH the sun was warm on the golden-gray meadow slope, it was not there that the little shepherdess loved to lead her flock. The crests of the hills were swimming in soft light, and breaths from flowered orchards yielded their way over the hills, but it was not there either that she lay in the long mornings. For it is the great green lowlands of Wales that are richest with early Spring magic, and it was in a magic lowland, hill-cradled, that Llorien fed her white flock in Spring.

Llorien was of woman's years, but her face was like the very early flowers. When flowers have not yet seen the sun-bow of a whole day from white east to red west, their little faces are not really alive; it is only after they have borne light, and have been with dew and stars, and have endured a night, that they understand the human eyes that look upon them. And little Llorien's face was like the very early flowers.

For years she had lived alone with old Glaunt, her father. Glaunt was a shepherd, and his image remained always in the hearts of those who had once looked upon him. He was a great, black-browed, black-bearded man with falling black hair. He spoke but little, perhaps because he was an old man, and it had all been said. He went among the gray hills, and stood black among his flocks, his shepherd's cloak blowing about his shoulders. All the country-side knew him, and responded gladly to his silent greeting. Many of the wool-combers and sheep-shearers feared him, as children fear the silence. But

old Gervyl, who lived near the fens, and who brewed strange distillations for the ailing sheep, knew that he loved the little four-petaled "silver-skins" that grew in the marsh, and she would send her boy to him across the early fields with a night's birth of them, or, it might be, with but a single silver stem to be drawn in his wide hat. Old Gervyl and her boy and little Llorien were the only ones who did not fear Glaunt, and they, too, loved to wear the strange little silver flowers.

Down in the lowland where Llorien fed her flock, the meadow was like a great green hall. On three sides, pleasant hills budded from the earth, and bore sweet odors which were neither of bloom nor of wind. Sometimes idle, white clouds rested on the curved summits of the hills like airy altars; and, when the evening star first burned above them—a silver priest come among his vessels—little Llorien led home her flock. This she was always unwilling to do, for the long, warm hours in the field were her delight. All day, she lay deep in the scented grass, facing the south where gloomed a purple wood—the Wood of Ydren. And it was because she feared and loved the Wood of Ydren that she spent her days upon its threshold.

A great violet cave of trees it was, miles deep, and, for aught Llorien knew, pathless. It was true that Cynan, son of a tradesman of Glastonbury, had told her that he had come through the wood with his father, carrying a load of leather to Caer, but Cynan was not to be believed. She

remembered scornfully how he had assured her that no flowers bloomed in the wood. No flowers in the Wood of Ydren! Llorien would as soon have believed that there were no fairies with harps making the music of the wind.

What it was that drew her to the wood's edge day by day, she could not have told. Near her father's cot was a little wood where trim, familiar flowers grew, pretending to be wild, but these could not deceive Llorien. She knew them every one—thistle-wort, witch-wort, glove-buds and little nodding spirilis. Beyond this domestic little wood was a meadow, and in this meadow grew sweet-smelling grasses, and, on clear mornings, one might see, through a blue cleft in the hills, the spires of Glastonbury; but here Llorien never spent an hour. Past her father's flock she went, and straight to the lowland at the edge of the Wood of Ydren. Perhaps something wonderful would happen there that day. Only yesterday she had fancied that she heard the faint fluting of a horn; and once she had been sure that she caught the flutter of a silver sleeve.

One morning Llorien rose with a happy heart and her mind filled with a dream. Not that her mind was ever seriously filled with anything but dreams, but she usually wove them while she woke, and this was a dream of sleep. When she had made breakfast for her father, she took a little skin of milk, and a basket of reeds, filled with goat's cheese and bread and berries, and she set off across the grass for the lowland, singing as she went, so that any little night people, left by chance in the meadow, might hear her in time, and escape. And the song she sang was one that had come to her in her dream—a dream in which strange silver faces had looked at her from the purple cave of trees, chanting:

"We are they who have gathered an aspen
flower
And have kissed it to red.
We are they who are snaring a silver bird
From its border bed.

"Lay the red blossom upon her red mouth,
Follow the silver bird far to the south,
But drink of the days of the Ydren Wood
No more till the flower be dead."

The three hills echoed her song pleasantly, the sheep scattered, bleating, over the wide, smiling field, and Llorien, venturing so near the wood that she could see the delicate shadows on the moss, sat down to wait.

Ronald Edgar always became an immediate part of any picture in which he found himself. Perhaps this was because he was young, and his heart sang within him, and because he lived every moment as if it were an unreal, painted moment, and not at all a part of the life that was some time to begin for him. He was, you will see, a poet. And he came out of the Wood of Ydren that morning into the lowland where white Spring was rioting and the little shepherdess was watching her flock, looking quite as if he had been painted in place by some kind god. As for Llorien, watching him breathlessly, she had always known that the wood must some day yield her something wonderful; and that it had come now was no miracle. It was simply as if she were dreaming a dream a little more real than her other dreams. Who shall say, therefore, that little Llorien, too, was not a poet?

Llorien's little red bodice and plaid kirtle and white sleeves, and the straying sheep against the sunny gray meadow, pleased Ronald's eyes. He smiled for the sake of the beauty of it all, and he raised his face and came forward smiling—a slim, gray figure with fair, uncovered head. Llorien thought of him always afterward with his face uplifted.

"Is there no pale shepherdess left in Lesbos?" he quoted, under his breath. And aloud he said:

"Good morning, little shepherdess. I saw a white thrush in the wood just now!"

Llorien regarded him gravely. He had spoken in her own tongue.

"That thrush is my friend," said Llorien, simply. "Every day I feed

him goat's cheese and crumbs from my basket."

Ronald strolled nearer.

"But why do you not take him home," he asked, "in that 'little hand-prison of woven reeds'?"

Llorien looked at him in surprise. "You must be one of the wicked wood-gods, after all," she said. "I thought, when I first saw you, that you were a beautiful, good one."

Ronald laughed delightedly, and threw himself on the grass beside her. Alas, his face was too beautiful to be a god's, but Llorien did not know.

"I will be a good god," he promised, "if you will let me stay a little while. Can you tell me the name of that wood?"

"We call it the Wood of Ydren," said Llorien.

"The Wood of Ydren, the Wood of Ydren," repeated Ronald, luxuriously, "the Wood of Ydren."

Llorien leaned forward. "What do you call it?" she asked, eagerly; "you and the other wood-gods?"

"Oh," said Ronald, "we call it the Wood of the Dark Star. You see," he went on, idly, "I am the god of the Dark Star."

"Well," said Llorien, "I am the Lady Silverskins—because of these flowers that my father loves. You may call me that, if you like."

Ronald watched her with an amused smile. She was very lovely, and it delighted him to find her so alive to his bits of fancy and so serious about her own. A little shepherdess, with her head singing with his own dreams! A little living girl, with a fancy wild as a fairy's and an accidental loveliness besides!

Llorien sighed, contentedly. It was wonderful to have some one near who did not talk of sheep-shearing at every breath, like Cynan. It was wonderful to have some one near who was not always silent, like her father, or lamenting, like old Gervyl. Why, this strange wood-god, with his face uplifted and his tongue sweet with names musical, was her kin, nearer to her than her austere cousins in Glastonbury,

nearer than Glaunt himself! Llorien did not understand, but she was very happy.

"Tell me about your friends," said Ronald.

Llorien began at once. "There is the white thrush," she said, "he is first. Then there is old Gervyl, and she tells me about the countries where all the fairies are dead, and it makes me cry. There is her boy, whose brain has got wrong—but he knows where the greenest little eggs are, and he never breaks them. And there is Cynan, who takes a long time to eat, and shakes the table when he laughs. If Cynan were to come here now, he would not see you. He wouldn't see anything but how fat the sheep are. Those are all my friends."

Ronald drew nearer and watched her breathlessly.

"And the wood-gods?" he said. "Surely you know other wood-gods, Lady Silverskins?"

"No, I don't," she said; "and yet I never really think of anything else, either. But I have never met any god but you."

Ronald drew a deep breath.

"O Lady Silverskins!" he said, "O Lady Silverskins!"

He shared her little luncheon that day, and added to it a flagon of thin wine and some fruit. All the day while the sun was high, and until the shadows slanted, they talked together. She found for him strange little flowers hidden in the grass, and he taught her to hear half-notes of birds, and to see far colors that she had not dreamed. He lay on the grass and sang to her—strange beautiful words in a strange tongue, so that she wept and "knew not wherefore." He repeated long, soft poems in her own language, wherein was some joy which she could not unravel. And, when the twilight fell, he walked beside her across the thick grass, trodden by the little beating hoofs before them, and the three hills upheld a white scimitar of moon—the sword of silver flame that always hangs over the gate of every Eden.

"Now I must give you three things."

said the little shepherdess, "or you will not be able to find me again."

She bent to gather a spray of witch-wort by a great stone.

"This," she said, "and the ribbon in my hair—and what else?"

"This," said Ronald.

She raised her face quite simply for his kiss.

"It doesn't matter," she said, shyly, "because not a bit of all this is really happening."

Ronald watched her little figure glimmer into the dusk.

"Wonderful little child," he said, "how she knows! She knows!"

The Wood of Ydren was sweet with singing birds and singing leaves and early slanting sun, the next morning when Ronald brushed his way through the mile of dew that lay between his Glastonbury inn and the lowland meadow. He was early—earlier than Llorien, and he had a capful of brown and pink witch-wort by the time she came over the hill, surrounded by her white sheep.

"You *are* real, after all," he cried, joyously, hastening to her, "or you would not have come again!"

She smiled, and sat down on a great Druid temple-stone, and beckoned him beside her.

"It is strange of you, Wood-God," she said, "always to talk about things being real. What difference can that make? We are both here."

Ronald shook his head, a little wistfully.

"It is not enough," he said, as a man will say.

Llorien stretched her slim, brown little arms up to the blue with a childish gesture.

"I love the whole world," she cried, "and everything in it. I don't care whether it is real or not."

The man shook his head.

"It is not enough," he said again.

It was delicious to watch Llorien through the long mornings. Sometimes she sang to him softly, with her eyes shut; sometimes she braided her hair in the sun; sometimes, to her faint, sweet little piping, she kept time

with her slim, brown arms, wound with flowers; when the fancy seized her, she put leaves in her hair, and danced for him on the Druid stone. And in the warmth of Ronald's presence and sympathy, her rich, waiting soul answered as a harp to the wind—aye, as a harp to the human hand that loves it. And all his store of fancy and affectionate understanding of beautiful things, Ronald poured out to her. Lore of all strange people, beautiful words and even radiant facts he told her, and bit by bit he taught her her own wonder. Her ignorance about things that were his own spiritual breath touched Ronald strangely. That she had actually never known this name, or that marvelous music, or some poem that was to him a quality of the universe, like the stars, appealed powerfully to him, and made him wonder the more that she had come to know true things so truly without their interposition.

"Suppose," he said to her one day, "that we were to see Arthur come pacing from the wood on a black charger, with Guinevere beside him, the sun on the silver trappings and on her gold hair. What would we do?"

She looked at him with wide eyes.

"Tell me about them," she said, simply; and Ronald found, almost with tears, that she had lived in Arthur's own land, in sight of the spires of Glastonbury, and did not know his name. And, while he told her of the knights, and how, though Arthur had been buried at Avalon, where her sheep came from, his body was inhumed at Glastonbury, and how Guinevere's long hair of plaited gold was found untouched by death—a black shadow loomed near, and Llorien turned with a cry to see her father watching them. When he heard what Ronald was telling her, Glaunt nodded in silence and walked away.

"I wonder whether father could see you, Wood-God," said Llorien, childishly; "can anybody see you but me?"

Ronald looked after the black figure of Glaunt, having the austerity and distinction of an old Norman king.

He noted the little silver wild flower tucked in his hat.

"I think he can," said Ronald, nodding, "yes, I think that your father would see."

"Old Gervyl can see you," said Llorien, "she has come often to the wall and looked across. But she talks with fairies. She is not afraid. Only Cynan could not see you."

"Who is Cynan?" asked Ronald, curiously. "You speak often of him; who is he?"

Llorien regarded him, gravely.

"I am going to marry Cynan some day soon," she answered.

"Going to marry Cynan?" repeated Ronald, dully.

"Yes," said Llorien, "after you have gone away, Wood-God."

"But if I don't go away!" cried Ronald.

"You will," answered Llorien, tranquilly, "wood-gods never stay."

Ronald looked away at the hills, and the meadow suddenly lost its wonder and was dull and sordid.

"Will you be happy?" he asked, at length.

"I used to wonder that, too, when I first loved you," said Llorien, "but I always knew that you must go away. And I must live."

"You love me!" cried Ronald.

"Why, yes," said Llorien, in surprise, "haven't we said so?"

"Yes," said Ronald, "yes, I suppose we have. But it isn't true if you can marry Cynan."

Llorien laughed.

"Oh, yes, it is," she cried; "you are only a wood-god. Nearly every woman, old Gervyl says, loves some wood-god best—but she is married happily, for all that."

Ronald looked at her with frightened eyes.

"Little child," he cried, "how did you know that?"

"You will always be my wood-god," Llorien went on, "but I shall marry Cynan and never see you. And he could not see you if he were to stand here now."

Ronald looked into her eerie little

face, and down, down into her deep eyes. She was so fragilely lovely, so delicately made, so exquisitely alive. Why, here was his wonder, his joy—the marvel for which he had sought to and fro on the earth, and despaired of ever finding! What of her crudities! He had not been there to form her. But now he would be, now he would be! Whatever this mysterious knowledge might be that was binding them together as no other ties can bind, she also had the knowledge. And he could not lose her. He bent swiftly and gathered her in his arms.

"Llorien," he cried, his lips upon her mouth, "Llorien! Don't let us lose each other. Oh, little child, don't let us lose each other! Don't let them take you away!"

She was still for a moment, and her face close to his was radiant. She was still, and she was happy; but she knew—wise little shepherdess who had found things out alone—she knew that what they dreamed must never be.

"Wood-God! Wood-God!" she sobbed then, clinging to him, "why didn't they make you just a man for me to love—yes, even a man like Cynan. At last I know—I know! And I wish you had been like Cynan!"

"But I am a man!" cried Ronald, "and I love you, Llorien, and I want to be always with you, and with no one else in the world."

She drew away from him, smiling through her tears.

"No," she said, shaking her head, "you are not real. You must go back to the other gods. I'm not Llorien to you. I'm only Lady Silverskins. Good-bye, Wood-God."

"Little child! little child!" he cried, holding out his arms.

"Good-bye, Wood-God," she said again.

Ronald went blindly through the Wood of Ydren, back to the inn in Glastonbury. And, alone in the wood, he was as miserable as he had ever been in his light, beautiful life.

"Good God!" he cried, "to think that I must lose the joy from my life because that wonderful little child

chances to have been a shepherdess and cannot understand that I am real. But, ah, how she understands everything else in the world! I shall love her all my life, and no one else."

To the Glastonbury inn that night there came a letter for Ronald Edgar, in exquisite little writing, like veins on the paper. Ronald read it, and, as he read, he felt an infinite longing for peace and order and a place to rest. He remembered the hand that had traced the letter—how strong and alive it was, how eager to serve him, how it had rested on his hair. As he sat there in the half-light of the little inn room, he looked in the eyes of the far-away woman who had written, and he knew in what loneliness she was waiting for him. He remembered her little housewifely care, her tenderness, her long-suffering—how long and in what anguish!—and a great yearning came over him for just the dear presence of her love—the love that loved him because she must, because she knew no other way. He held out his arms in the dark like a tired child.

"Little mother," he cried, "come and take me away!"

So Ronald went back to the white cliffs and the white villas of his own land, and the woman was waiting for him, all joy and all tenderness. And there he made a home for her, and he lived through happy years, watching her about her little duties, watching a certain exquisite fashion she had of lowering her head as she talked, loving the peace and the care and the quiet of his life with her. And if sometimes he dreamed alone on the white terrace at evening, it was not of Llorien, though it was of the life that they shared—the life of which the tender little woman within doors knew no more than she knew of the real wonder of the man whom she loved with her whole loyal heart.

"Have you ever loved any one else, beloved, as you love me?" she would ask, a little wistfully when she was feeling, but could not fathom, his exquisite aloofness.

"Now see, dear—see," he would say, "a dream or two I may have had—but I must have my foolish dreams. But they were wild dreams, after all, while our dream is all peace. No, I have never loved any one but you."

Then she was content. He had answered in a tongue strange to her, but she could read the light in his eyes, and she was content. And to himself he said:

"Yes, they were wild dreams, after all. Here is rest. It is better so."

Near the lowland on the edge of the Wood of Ydren lived Llorien and Cynan. In the evenings when the sheep were in the fold, the two would sit outside their door, and warm winds coming over the hills would bring to Llorien sound of a late bird-note or tinkle of a far sheep-bell, or odor of the sweets of the air. Llorien would sit near the door so that she might hear the sleepy stir of little Cedell or Edval within, and her hands were heavy in her lap from their long day's toil. Drowsing on the bench near by, his pipe fallen from his lips, would lie Cynan. Sometimes he would start and arch his brows sleepily as he looked at her.

"What did you say?" he would ask, thickly.

"Nothing," Llorien would answer.

"What do you see over there?" he would persist, fretfully. And Llorien, her eyes turned always toward the purple cave of trees, would answer:

"Nothing."

For no far, faint horn ever came from the Wood of Ydren now, and she never thought to catch the flutter of a silver sleeve.

Sometimes Cynan, pausing on his way to his tobacco-bag, would lay his hand heavily on her shoulder, and ask:

"Is anything the matter? Are you worrying over the lambs? Is anything the matter?"

And Llorien, suffering the caress, would answer:

"Nothing."

Old Glaunt, leaning against the riven tree near the cot, looked on and

was silent, but he remembered the old days, and sometimes he smote his forehead, and wondered. Old Gervyl, toiling across the wold with her short skirt filled with silver skins, looked on, too, and remembered the days when she watched by the wall, but she wondered aloud:

"Will the wood-god never come back?" she would ask.

"Aye," Llorien would answer, "perhaps he is here all the time, and I am

like Cynan—and cannot see him. But I think the wood-god is dead. It is better so."

But a wise man, who learned the story as he walked one day in the Wood of Ydren, could not be certain.

"The Wood of Ydren," he repeated, lingering lovingly over the name, "the wood-god, and Lady Silverskins, and the Wood of Ydren. These things are strange and terrible. But, tell me, why is it better so?"



ENOUGH FOR ME

ENOUGH for me, a fire-lit spot,
The world shut out, grim care forgot;
And near me, in the rosy glow,
A sweet girl rocking to and fro—
I'faith! mine is a happy lot!

An earthen kettle, steaming hot,
A pipe, a book of tender plot,
A glance, a smile, a kiss or so—
Enough for me.

To-day a palace, not a cot,
Ten clubs, an auto and a yacht
Are mine. A smile? a kiss? ah, no!
That dull content was years ago;
Now all my minted wealth is not
Enough for me!

JENNIE BETTS HARTSWICK.



TIMELY WARNING

FORTUNE-TELLER—Beware of the handsome man with dark eyes and brilliant diamond pin.

FAIR MAID—Why?

"You can't support him."

THE LAST TIME

SOME day the slanting sunbeams on the floor
 To one of us will give no kindly light,
 For all the world will change to darkest night
 The hour the Reaper pauses at our door;
 Some day a heart that hungers, stabbed and sore,
 Will strive to bear its bitter cross aright;
 With hands that falter and with dimming sight
 The one will seek the other evermore.

So let each word be tender, and the touch,
 So gentle, grow each day more gentle still,
 For Love's dear day will vanish all too fast;
 And, at the end, since we have loved so much,
 A lingering peace the sore heart may distil—
 Remembering the kiss that was the last.

MYRTLE REED.



ANXIOUS TO KNOW

A LICE—He is a dissolute young man.
 GERTRUDE—But he is to be married soon.
 “What a shame! Who is the hateful thing?”



WOULD HAVE BORNE IT ALONE

J. AXSON BOND—Would you have loved me had I been poor?
 SHE—Certainly, my love; but I'd have kept you in blissful ignorance of the fact.



TIME WILL TELL

SINGLETON—Oh, I'm no fool.
 DOUBLETON—Don't be too sure about it. I used to talk in that strain before I was married.

THE BLUE PEAR

By Arthur Stringer

DURKIN sat at the café table, smoking, his watch in his hand. It was already seven minutes to four. As the seventh minute slipped into the sixth, and the sixth into the fifth, some first, vague sense of impending disaster stole over him.

"Is this seat taken, sir?"

It was a waiter speaking, with a short, florid man at his heels.

"Yes," said Durkin, quietly, "I'm expecting a lady—in five minutes."

The florid man bowed. The waiter said "Yes, sir," tipped the chair against the table edge, and went on in search of a seat.

Durkin smoked hard once more, relishing the irony of it all. He did not, naturally enough, explain that the lady he was expecting had made the engagement two thousand miles away from the table at which he sat and at which he was to meet her precisely on the stroke of four. Such things were theatrical, and unnecessary; besides, one had to allow for accidents. And once more, with a puzzled brow, he took up his paper and looked through the *Teutonic's* passenger-list, still involuntarily cast down by a wayward sense of possible calamity.

He imagined some dark coalition of forces against him, obscurely depressed for the moment, by the shadow of some immense, seemingly impassive, and yet implacable, animosity of eternal rule toward the accidental revolver. The same vague feeling had possessed him the day he first abandoned his operator's key and became an "overhead guerrilla." Still later it had come to him, when, dazzled by the splendor of

a vast hazard, he joined forces with the notorious MacNutt and became a professional wire-tapper, so audaciously and yet so cautiously bleeding Penfield's pool-rooms, in the very teeth of Inspector Doogan and his men. Still, he argued with himself, that had been a victory of intelligence—and would not victory always be with the alerter mind and the warier hand? Would they not still meet and combat, point by point, this vague and mysterious enemy whose emissaries, even though relentless, were always so temptingly dull?

A woman, dressed in black, with a dark veil caught up around the rim of her hat, pushed her way through the crowded café toward the table in the corner. She might have passed for a mere girl, but for the heavy shadows about the weary-looking, violet eyes and the betraying fullness of her womanly breast and hips. She glanced at the clock, and smiled a little, with her calm, almost pensive lips, as she placed a pearl-gloved hand on the back of the tilted chair.

"I am on time, you see," she said, quietly, in her soft contralto, as she sank into the chair with a contented sigh, and began drawing off her gloves. "It is precisely four o'clock."

"Why, Mame!" cried Durkin, with eloquent enough inadequacy, his face paling a little, for all his assumption of easy fortitude. He continued to look at her, a sudden lump in his throat choking back the hundred stampeding words that seemed clamoring to escape. For one wavering moment she let her eyes lose their studied calmness, and, inwardly surrendering, gazed at

him recklessly, abandonedly, with her very soul in her face.

"Dearest!" she whispered to him, with her back to the crowded room.

He tried to seize her ungloved hand in his, but she drew him up with a sudden monitory "Hsssh!" Then he, too, remembered, and they took up their rôle again.

"Now, you want, I know, a good silver fizz, and I want a nice, old-fashioned, warm milk-punch. For, oh, Jim, I'm tired right out!"

Durkin called his waiter and gave him the order, puffing his cigar with assumed insolence of unconcern, while the woman murmured across the table to him:

"You look quite foreign, with that magnificent Vandyke! And, by the way, how do you like my English bang?"

"Why, it's dyed!" said Durkin, for the first time missing the sunny glint in the familiar crown of chestnut.

"Jim," said the woman, in lower tones, sobering, "there's trouble ahead!"

She drew her chair a little closer, and leaned forward, with her elbows on the table and her chin in her hands. Durkin lighted another cigar, and lounged toward her with the same careless pose, his face alert with a new and different interest.

"You don't mean Doogan's men?"

"Not so loud, dear! No, not Doogan's men. It's nothing like that. But first tell me, quickly, has anything gone wrong over here?"

"Not a thing—except that you were away."

"But hasn't anything happened since I saw you?"

"Nothing worth while. It's been so dull, so deadly dull, I almost jumped back into the old game, and held up a pool-room or two. Five whole weeks of—of just waiting for you!"

She caught up her veil, where a part of it drooped from her hat-brim, and smiled her wistfully girlish smile at him. Then she glanced carefully about her; no one seemed within ear-shot.

"Yes, I know. It seemed just as long to me, dearest. Only *I* had to jump into something. That's what I must tell you about—but we can't talk here."

"Then we'll have William call a hansom?"

"Not a hansom, Jim—a four-wheeler. We can talk there without having a driver lifting a lid over our heads every two minutes.

"Do you know," she went on, dreamily, as she watched the waiter push out through the crowded, many-odored room, "I often think I must have lived through all the ordinary feelings of life. I mean that we have taken such chances together, you and I, that now only a big thing can stir me into interest. I suppose we have exhausted all the everyday sensations of life!"

"Yes, I know the feeling," said Durkin, through his cigar-smoke. "I suppose it's really a sort of drunkenness with us now. I couldn't go back to the other things, any more than I could go back to—to stogies. All this last five weeks of hanging about I've felt like—oh, like a sailor who'd pounded round every strange sea in all the world, and has come home to be told not to go out of his own back-yard."

"That's how I felt in London, with nothing to do, nothing to think about, or plan, or live for. I got so I nearly screamed every time I faced the four dull walls of that hotel room. But, you see, we have both fallen back on the wrong sort of stimulant. Neither of us two should ever have been evil-doers. I'm too much—oh, too much like other women, I suppose! And you're too thin-skinned and introspective—too much of a Hamlet! You should never have tapped a wire; and I should never have been a welcher and robbed MacNutt. You ought to have gone on being a nice, respectable young train-despatcher, with a row of geraniums in front of your station-window; and I ought to be a prim little branch-office telegrapher, in one of those big Broadway hotel corridors,

in a little wire cage between the newsstand and the cigar-counter. Then we should both have a lot to look for and to live for!"

She broke off, inconsequentially, and gazed out through the lightly-curtained café window, to where a street-piano was throbbing out the waltz-tune of "Sammy."

"Do you remember our little inn at Cumnor last Spring, and the first time you ever heard an English cuckoo? You said it was my voice, set to music! Oh, what a happy two weeks those were!" And she gazed at him dreamily, as she hummed the tune of "Sammy" in her throaty, low-noted contralto, ending with a nonchalant little laugh as she looked up and said, "But here's our cab, at last!"

In the half-light of the carriage, as they turned into Fifth avenue and swung up toward Central Park, she let her tired body rest against his shoulder, with her arm clinging to him forlornly. There was a minute or two of silence, and then putting her face up to him, she said, with a sudden passionate calmness,

"Kiss me!"

He felt the moist warmth of her capitulating lips, the clinging weight of her inert body, and, deep down within his own consciousness, he knew that, if need be, he could die for her as the purest knight might have died for some old-world lady of spotless soul and name. Yet, after all, he wondered, as he held her there, were they so irretrievably bad? Was it not only their game, this life they had drifted into—their anodyne, their safeguard against exhausted desire and the corroding idleness of life?

She must intuitively have felt what was running through his mind, as she slipped away from him, and drew back into her own corner of the carriage, with a new look of brooding melancholy in her shadowy eyes.

"If I were ignorant, and coarse, and debased, then I could understand it. But I'm not! I have always wanted to be honest. From the first, I have longed to be decent!"

"You *are* honest, through and through," he protested. "You are as strong and true as steel!"

She shook her head, but he caught her in his arms, and she lay there half-happy again.

"Oh, Mame, for the twentieth time," he pleaded, "won't you marry me?"

"No, no, no; not till we're honest!" she cried, in alarm. "I wouldn't dare to, I couldn't, until then."

"But we're only what we have been. We can't change it all in a day, can we? Especially when there's so much behind!"

"I want to be decent!" she cried, in a sort of muffled wail. "No, no; I can't marry you, Jim—not yet! We may not be honest with other people, but we must be honest with ourselves!"

A policeman, directing the crowded street traffic at Forty-second street, glanced in at them through the misty cab-window and smiled broadly. It seemed to remind her of other worlds, for she at once sat up more decorously.

"Time! time! We're losing time—and I have so much to tell you."

"Then give me your hand to hold while you talk."

She hesitated for a half-laughing moment, and then surrendered it.

"Now, tell me everything, from the first."

II

"It's the Blue Pear," she said, hesitatingly, wondering how to begin.

"And just what is that?"

"You have never heard of the Blue Pear?"

"Never!"

"But you wouldn't, of course—most of it happened after you had sailed. The Blue Pear, Jim, is a diamond. It's a diamond that you and I, in some way or another, have got to get back!"

"To get back? Then when did we lose it?"

"I lost it. That's what I've got to tell you."

"Well, first tell me what it is."

"It's a very odd diamond, and a very big diamond, tinted with the same

pale-blue coloring as the Hope diamond. That's how it came to get its name. But the odd thing about it is that, when it was cut in Amsterdam, rather than grind away a fifteen-carat irregularity, it was left in a sort of pear-shape. Even before it was mounted by Lalique, it sold in Paris for well over four thousand pounds. Later, in Rio de Janeiro, it brought something like five thousand pounds. There it was given to a French actress by a Spanish-American coffee-king. It was an African stone in the first place."

"But what's all this geography for?" asked Durkin.

"Wait, dear, and you'll understand. The coffee-king quarreled with the Paris woman. This woman, though, smuggled the stone back to France with her. It was sold there, a few months later, for about one-fourth its market value. Still later, it was bought for a little under six thousand pounds, by the late Earl of Warton, who gave it to his younger daughter, Lady Margaret Singford, when she married young Cicely—Sir Charles Cicely, who was wounded in the Boer War, you remember. Well, Sir Charles didn't like the setting—it had been made into a marquise ring of some sort—so he took it to René Lalique's workshop, in Paris, and had it mounted after his own ideas."

"But who is Lalique?"

"A French *l'art nouveau* goldsmith—the Louis Tiffany of the Continent. But I've a lot to tell you, Jim, and only a little time to do it in, so we shall have to cut out these details. Lalique made a pendant out of the Blue Pear, hung on a thin gold stem, between little leaves of beaten gold, with diamond dew-drops on them. Well, four weeks ago the Blue Pear was stolen from Lady Margaret's jewel-case. No, Jim, thank you, not by me; but, if you'll wait, I shall try to explain."

"I hardly know now what made me do it—it was *ennui* and being lonesome, I suppose. But I had detective-agency cards printed, and went straight to the Cicelys. Lady Margaret

wouldn't see me; she sent down word that the reward of a thousand pounds was still open and that there was no new information. But I saw her at last—I sha'n't explain just how. Before very long I found out something rather remarkable—I mean the fact that Lady Margaret wanted to drop the case altogether, and was rather trying to blind Scotland Yard and the police. And that started me thinking.

"Before the end of the week, I found out that Lady Margaret's young brother had made a mess of things at Oxford, had been mixed up later in a row at Monaco, and had decided to try ranching in the Canadian Northwest. I had already booked my passage on the *Deutschland*, but the whole thing was too alluring, and, when I found young Singford was sailing that week on the *Teutonic*, I succeeded in getting a berth on that steamer. Jim, as soon as I saw that wretched boy on deck I knew I had guessed right, or almost right. Oh, I know them, I know them! I suppose it's because I've been mixed up with so many of them. But there he was, as plain as day, a criminal with stage-fright, a beginner without enough nerve to face things out. I rather think he may have been a nice boy at one time. And I know just how easy it is, once you make the first little wrong turn, to keep on and on and on, until you daren't turn back, even if you had the chance to."

"And you took pity on him?" inquired Durkin; "or merely vivisected him—at a distance?"

"Not altogether—but first I must tell you of the second dilemma. Before we sailed, and the first day out, I thought it best to keep to my cabin—you know why, of course. After all, this is such a little world when the Central office is after you! That was precisely what I thought, only a good deal harder, when I sat down to dinner, the second day out, and glanced across the table. You remember my telling you about my first trouble in America, when I was a shrinking and pink-cheeked young English governess, and never knew a bold thought

or a dishonest act? Do you remember my describing the woman—it's always a woman who is hard on another woman!—who accused me of—of having designs on her husband? Her husband, a miserable, oily, little Hebrew diamond-merchant who twice insulted me on the stairs of his own house, and I had to swallow it without a word! Well, it was that woman who sat across the table from me. They had put me at the captain's table—my London gown, you see, looks uncommonly well. But there was that woman, a little more faded and wizened and wrinkled, looking at me with those beady old hawk-eyes of hers; and I knew there was trouble ahead.

"A war-correspondent, who had been nice to me, had brought up about everybody at our table worth while, and introduced them to me that night before going down. So, when I saw that yellow face and those hawk-eyes, I knew I had to think hard and fast.

"Are you not the young woman," she said, in a sort of nasal scream of indignation, 'are you not the young woman whom I once employed as a governess and discharged for misconducting herself with—er—with the other servants?'

"I was so busy trying to be cool that I didn't bother thinking out an answer, though I did want to say it was not a servant, but her own devoted husband. I kept on talking to the captain, deciding to ignore her icily. But that yellow hag deliberately repeated her question, and I heard the war-correspondent gasp out an indignant 'My God, madam!' and saw the captain's face growing redder and redder. So I went on sweetly, and asked the ship's doctor if intoxication was getting commoner on the high seas. Then she began to splutter and tremble. I kept looking at her as languidly as ever, and a steward had to help her away.

"But she knew she was right. And she knew that I knew she knew. Though I had all the men on my side, and the captain cheerfully saw to it that she was moved down among the commercial travelers and the school-

ma'ams, I knew well enough that she was only waiting for her chance.

"It didn't change the face of things, but it upset me, and made me more cautious in the way I handled young Singford. In some way, I felt sorry for the poor devil. I thought a little sympathy might perhaps soften him, and make him tell me something worth while. But he had too much good old English backbone for that. And, although he told me I was the best woman he ever knew, and a little more solemn nonsense like that, I at last had to go for him very openly. It was a moonlight night—the sea air was as soft as Summer. We were standing by the rail, looking out over the water. Then I made the plunge, and very quietly told him I knew he had stolen his sister's diamond pendant, and that for two days he had been thinking about committing suicide.

"I watched his hand go up to his breast-pocket—the moon was on his terrified young face—and I came a little nearer to him, for I was afraid of something—I tried to tell him there was no use jumping overboard, and none whatever in throwing the Blue Pear there—that would only make things past mending, forever. Besides, he was young, and his life was still before him. I talked to him—well, I believe I cried over him a little. And finally, without a word, he reached in under his coat, and there in the moonlight handed me the Blue Pear. I gave him my word of honor it would be taken back to his sister, and even lent him twenty pounds. That was the night before we came up the Bay.

"I slipped down to my cabin, and turned on the electric-light. Then I opened the little case and looked at my pendant. You know I never liked diamonds, they always seemed so cold and hard and cruel—well, as though the tears of a million women had frozen into one drop. But this Blue Pear—oh, Jim, it was a beautiful thing!"

"It was—good heavens, you don't mean——?"

"Shhhh! Not so loud! Yes, that is just it. There I stood trying it in the light, feasting on it, when a voice said behind me, a voice that made my hair creep at the roots, 'A very unsafe stone to smuggle, young lady!' and there, just inside my door, stood the yellow hag. She had stolen down, I suppose, to nose among my luggage a bit. I could have killed her—I almost did try it.

"We stood staring at each other; it was the second battle of the kind on board that ship. I realized she had the upper hand in this one. I never saw such envy and greed and cruelty in a human face, as she ogled that stone.

"It seemed to intoxicate her—she was drunk to get her hands on it—and she had enough of her own, too. So, once more, I had to think hard and fast, for I knew this time she would be relentless.

"No, I sha'n't smuggle it,' I said, in answer to her look.

"You pay duty—a thousand, two thousand dollars!' she gasped at me, still keeping her eyes on the stone, flashing there in the light. 'Given to you,' she hissed, 'by some loving father whose child you guided into the paths of wisdom? Oh, I know you, you lying hussy! It's mine!' she cried, like a baby crying for the moon. 'It's mine! You—you stole it from me!'"

She paused, at the memory of the scene, and Durkin stirred uneasily on the seat.

"What made the fool say that?" he demanded.

"Why, she meant that she intended to claim it, insinuating that she would see that it was declared at the wharf if I kept it, and arguing that I might as well lose it quietly to her, as to the treasury officers. I knew in a flash, then, that she didn't know what the Blue Pear was. I closed the little gun-metal case with a snap. Then I put it, Blue Pear and all, in her hand. She turned white, and asked me what I meant.

"I'm going to give it to you,' I said,

as coolly as I could, making a virtue of what I felt was going to be a necessity.

"She tore open the case, looked at the stone, weighed it in her fingers, gasped a little, held it to the light again, and then turned and looked at me.

"This pendant *was* stolen!' she cried, with sudden conviction. She looked at the stone again—she couldn't resist it.

"You might call it the Robin's Egg, when you have it recut!' I told her.

"She gave a jump—that was what she was thinking of, the shrewd old rascal. She shoved the case down in her lean old breast.

"Then you will smuggle it in for me?' I asked her.

"Yes, I'll get it through, if I have to swallow it!"

"And you will keep it?' I asked; and I laughed, I don't know why.

"You remember my house?' she cried, with a start.

"Like a book!' I told her.

"But still I'll keep it!' she declared.

"It was a challenge, a silly challenge, but she didn't seem to realize that keeping the Blue Pear was like trying to conceal a white elephant, or attempting to hide away a mountain. Then that cruel, old, avaricious, over-dressed, natural-born criminal had her turn at laughing—a little hysterically, I think. And, for a minute or two, I felt that all the world had gone mad, that we were only two gray, gibbering ghosts talking in the enigmas of insanity, penned up in throbbing cages of white-enameled iron.

"I followed her out of the cabin, and walked up and down alone in the moonlight, wondering if I had done right. At the wharf, I fully intended to risk everything and inform on her, then cable to the Cicelys. But she must have suspected something like that—my stewardess had already told me there were two treasury department detectives on board—and got her in-nings first. For I found myself quietly taken in charge, and my luggage gone

over with a microscope—to say nothing of the gentle old lady who massaged me so apologetically from head to foot, and seemed put out to find I had nothing more dutiable than an extra pair of French gloves.”

“Had you expected this beforehand?” interposed Durkin.

“Yes, the stewardess had told me there was trouble ahead—that’s what made me afraid about the Blue Pear. Just as I got safely through customs, though, I caught sight of the yellow hag despatching her maid and luggage home in a four-wheeler, while she herself sailed away in another. I felt so sure she was going straight to her husband’s store—Isaac Ottenheimer & Company, the jeweler and diamond man on Fifth avenue, you know—that I scrambled into a hansom and told the driver to follow my friend to Ottenheimer’s. When we pulled up there, I drew the side-curtains and watched through a quarter-inch crack. The woman came out again, looking very relieved and triumphant. And that’s the whole story, only——”

She did not finish the sentence, but looked at Durkin, who was slowly and dubiously rubbing his hands together, with the old, weary, half-careless look all gone from his studious face. He glanced back at the woman beside him, admiringly, lost himself in thought for a moment, and then laughed outright.

“You’re a dare-devil, Mame, if there ever was one!” he cried, and then suddenly grew serious once more.

III

FOUR hours later, in that shabby little oyster-house often spoken of as “The Café of Failures,” and lying less than a stone’s throw from the shabbiest corner of Washington square, Miss Mabel Chandler met by appointment a stooped and somewhat sickly-looking workman carrying a small bag of tools. This strange couple sought out a little table in one of the odorous alcoves of the oyster-house, and talked at great length and in low tones over an unexpectedly generous dinner.

“You say it’s a Brandon & Stark eight-ton vault; but can’t you give me something more definite than that to work on?” the man was asking of the girl.

“Only what I’ve told you about its position; I had to watch out for Ottenheimer every minute I was in that store.”

“I see. But while I think of it, providing we do find the stone there, do we turn it over again, or——?”

“I gave my word of honor, Jim!”

The shadow of a smile on his face died away before her unyielding solemnity.

“Oh, of course! There is a thousand pounds on it, anyway, isn’t there?”

She nodded her head in assent.

“But I think we’ve got our trouble before us, and plenty of it, before we see that thousand pounds,” he said, with a shrug.

“The time’s so short—that is the danger. As I was on the point of telling you, Ottenheimer has an expert diamond-cutter in his shops.”

“And that means he’ll have the apex off our Pear at the first chance, and, ergo, it means hurry for us. But tell me the rest.”

“Ottenheimer himself owns, I discovered, the double building his store is in. He has his basement, of course, his ground-floor show-room and store, and work-rooms, and shipping department, and all that, on the second story. Above them is a lace importer. On the top floor there is a chemical fire-apparatus agency. In the south half of the building, with the hall and stairway between, is an antique-furniture store, and above them a surgical-supply company. The third and top floors are taken up by two women photographers—their reception-room on the third floor, their operating-room, and that sort of thing, on the top floor, with no less than two skylights and a transom opening directly on the roof. I arranged for a sitting with them. That is the floor we ought to have, but the building is full. Three doors below, though, there was a top, back studio suite to let, and I’ve taken it

for a month. There we have a transom opening on the roof; I looked through, merely to see if I could hang my washing out sometimes. But barring our roof off from Ottenheimer's is an ugly iron fencing."

"Did you get a chance to notice their wiring?"

"The first thing. We can cut in and 'loop' their telephone from our back room, with thirty feet of number twelve wire."

"Then we've got to get in on that line, first thing!"

He ruminated in silence for a minute or two.

"Of course, you didn't get a glimpse of the basement, under Ottenheimer's?"

"Hardly, Jim. We shall have to leave that to the gasman!"

And they both laughed a little over the memory of a certain gasman who short-circuited a private line in the basement of the stock-exchange building and, through doing so, upset one of the heaviest cotton-brokerage businesses on Wall street.

"Did you notice any of the other wires, power circuits, and that kind of thing?"

"Yes; but there were too many of them! I know, though, that Ottenheimer's wires go south along our roof."

"Then the sooner we give a quiet ear to that gentleman's conversation, the better for us. Have you had any furniture moved in?"

"It goes this evening. By the way, though, what am I just at present?"

Durkin thought for a moment, and then suddenly remembered her incongruous love for needlework.

"You'd better be a hard-working maker of cotillon-favors, don't you think? You might have a little showcase put outside."

She pondered the matter, drumming on the table with her impatient fingers.

"But how is all this going to put us inside that eight-ton safe?"

"That's the trouble we've got to face," he laughed back at her.

"But haven't you thought of anything?"

"Yes. I've been cudgeling my brains until I feel light-headed. Nitro-glycerine I object to—it's so odiously criminal, so abominably crude, and so disgustingly noisy. And it's brain we've got to cudgel, and not safe-doors. Now, speaking as an expert, by lighting, say, a piece of sulphur, and using it as a sort of match to start combustion, I could turn on a stream of liquid oxygen and burn through that safe-steel about the same as through a pine board. But the trouble is in getting the oxygen. Or a couple of gallons of liquid air, say, poured on the top of the safe, ought to chill the steel so that one good blow from a sledge would crack it. Or by tapping an exceptionally strong power-circuit somewhere, I could fuse portions of the steel with electricity, and cut it away like putty. But all that, you see, is mechanical and coarse; and it all has its drawbacks, too."

"Then what can we do?"

"Use these thick heads of ours to advantage—think, not pound, our way in. Mame, we've got to get at that safe as Ottenheimer himself would!"

They looked at each other for a minute of unbroken silence, the one trying to follow the other's wider line of thought.

"Well, there's where our fun comes in, I suppose," said Mame, valiantly, feeling for the first time a little qualm of doubt.

Durkin, who had been plunged in thought, turned to her with a sudden change of manner.

"You're a bad lot, Mame!" he said, warmly, catching her frail hands in his own.

"I know it," she answered, wistfully, leaning passively on her elbows. "But some day I'm going to change—we're both going to change!" And she stroked his studiously bent head with her hand, in a miserably solicitous maternal sort of way, and sighed heavily once or twice, trying in vain to console herself with the question as to why a good game should be spoilt by a doubtful philosophy.

IV

ENTRENCHED in her little top-floor studio, behind a show-case of cotillon favors, Miss Cecelia Starr sat in her wicker rocker, very quietly and very contentedly, sewing. She felt that it had been an exceptionally profitable day for her.

Three hair-pins and a linen handkerchief held a watch-case receiver close over her ear, after the style of the metallic ear-bands of a central-office operator. Leading from this improvised ear-band and trailing across the floor out into her private room at the back, ran a green, cloth-covered wire. This wire connected again with an innocent-looking and ordinary desk-battery transmitter, rigged up with a lever-switch, and standing on a little table next to the wall, up which might be detected the wires that since ten o'clock that morning had tapped and bridged the general wire connecting the offices of Ottenheimer & Company with the outside world.

From time to time the members of that firm went to their telephone, little dreaming that a young lady, decorously sewing velvet scissor-cases on a studio top-floor of another building, was quietly listening to every message that passed in and out of their bustling place of business. It was a strange medley of talk, some of it incoherent, some of it dull, some of it amusing. Sometimes the busy needle was held poised, and a more interested and startled expression flitted over the shadowy violet eyes of Miss Cecelia Starr. At such times she vaguely felt that she was a disembodied spirit, listening to the hum of a far-away world, or that she was an old astrologer, gazing into some mystic and forbidden crystal. Still again as she listened, she felt like an invisible eagle, poised high in ethereal emptinesses, watching hungrily a dim and far-off sign of earthly life and movement.

Suddenly, from the street door sounded the familiar two-three ring of Durkin. This door remained open during the day, and she waited for him

to come up. She went to her own door, however, and laughed girlishly as he stepped into the room, mopping his moist forehead. There was a very alert, nervous, triumphant expression in his eyes, and, once again, the feeling swept over her that it was now only crime, and crime alone, that could stimulate into interest and still satisfy their fagged vitalities. It was their one and only intoxication, the one thing that could awaken them from their mental sloth and stir them from the shadowy valley of disillusionment.

Her quick eye had taken note of the fact that he wore a soiled blue uniform and the leather-peaked blue cap of a Consolidated Gas Company employee, and that he carried with him a brass hand-pump. He laughed a little to himself, put down his pump in one corner of the room, and allowed his fingers to stray through his mutilated Vandyke, now a short and straggly growth of sandy whiskers. Then he turned to her with an unuttered query on his face.

"I was right," she said, quietly, but hurriedly.

"I never really doubted it!"

"Ottenheimer has a private drawer in the vault. It's in that. His wife telephoned down very cautiously about it this morning. A little later, too, Ottenheimer was called up from a Brooklyn drug-store, by a Mrs. Van Gottschalck, or some such name, who said her husband was still in bed with the grip, and couldn't possibly get over until Monday. This man, you see, is Ottenheimer's diamond-cutter."

"Thank heaven! That gives us a little more time!"

"Three days, at least. But what have you done, Jim?"

"Been trying to persuade the janitor of the Ottenheimer building that I was sent to pump the water out of his gas-pipes. But he was just as sure that I wasn't. I got down in his cellar, though, and had a good look about, before I saw it wouldn't do to push the thing too far. So I insisted on going up and seeing the owner about that order. There was an inside stairway

and a queer-looking steel door I wanted to get my knuckles against. I started up there, but he hauled me back. I found out, though, that this door is made of one-inch, steel armor-plate. There's another door leading from the foot of the outer hallway into the cellar itself. But that's only covered with soft sheet-iron—more for fire than anything else. Fifteen minutes will get through that one, easily. It's the inner door that is the problem. I tried it with a knife-point—just one hard little jab. It took the end off my Rogers blade."

"But is this door the only way in?"

"Absolutely; the rear is impossible, bricked-up; and the avenue itself is a little too conspicuous. The bolts of this door, as far as I can make out, slide into heavy steel cups sunk in solid cement, and are controlled, of course, from inside. Judging from the thickness of these, and the sound of the door, it would take either a pound of soap and nitro-glycerine on the one hand, or five hours of hard drilling on the other, to get through. We'll say seven hours, altogether, to get into the building. Then comes the safe, or, rather, the vault itself. I had a casual glance at that safe, this morning, before I got these duds on—dropped in to purchase an engagement-ring, but was altogether too hard to suit. It's a ten-tonner, I believe, and about as burglar-proof as it can be made. Nothing but a gallon of guncotton would make so much as a dent in it. But, here again, explosions are not in my line. We've got to use these wits of ours. We've got to get in that safe, and we've got to get through that door! I can't risk six hours of machine-shop work down there; and I'm still too respectable to drop into safe-cracking!"

"Well, the combinations of that sort of vault, you know, aren't often advertised on the ash-barrels."

"What do you mean?"

"I mean we have got to get it by our own wits, as you say."

"The janitor, old Campbell, leaves the building about ten-fifteen every night. He's also a sort of day-watch-

man, I find. He's a pretty intelligent and trusty old fellow, absolutely unapproachable, from our standpoint. Another thing, too, the place is webbed with burglar-alarm apparatus. It would take another hour or so to get the right wires cut safely off. I hate to feel squeamish, at this time of the game—but that Ottenheimer safe does look uninviting!"

Mame walked up and down, with the little watch-case receiver and its handkerchief still crowning her heavy mass of dark hair, like a coronet, and green wires trailing behind her, like the outline of a bridal veil. She was thinking fast and desperately. Suddenly, she stopped in the midst of her pacing, and looked hard at Durkin.

"I've found it!" she said, in a feverish half-whisper. "We've got to do it!"

Durkin looked at her gloomily, still struggling with his own line of fruitless thought.

"Here, Jim, quick! Take this, and listen." She placed the receiver close to his ear as she spoke. "Now, that's Ottenheimer himself at the 'phone. Can you catch his voice distinctly? Well, do you notice what kind of a voice it is—its timbre, I mean? A plaintive-toned, guttural, suave, mean, cringing sort of voice! Listen hard! He may not be at the 'phone again to-day. Is he still talking?"

"Yes, the old scoundrel! There, he's finished."

"What was it about?"

"Just kicking to some one down in Maiden Lane because Judge Hazel of the district court has overruled the board of appraisers and imposed a ten per cent. *ad valorem* duty on natural pearls coming in."

"But his voice—Jim, you have got to learn to imitate that voice!"

"And then what?"

"Then cut in, presumably from Ottenheimer's own house, and casually ask, say, Phipps, the junior salesman and head of the shipping department, just what your safe combination happens to be. It has slipped your memory, you see!"

"And Phipps, naturally, will ring up central and verify the call."

"Not at all! At the first sound from him we shall cut his wire."

"Which cuts us off, and gives us away, as soon as a special messenger can deliver a message and a lineman trace up the trouble."

"Then why cut him off at all? If that's too risky, should the worst come to the worst, we can tell central it's a case of crossed wires, bewilder her a bit, and then shut ourselves off."

"I believe you've almost got it."

"But can you get anywhere near that voice?"

"Listen, Mame, how's this?"

He drew in his chin, half laughingly, and throwing his voice into a whining yet businesslike guttural, spoke through an imaginary transmitter to an imaginary Ottenheimer.

"That would never, never do!" cried Mame, despairingly. "He's a German Jew, if you have noticed—he sounds his *w*'s like *w*'s, and not like *v*'s, but he makes his *r*'s like *w*'s."

"Oh, I have it," broke in Durkin, from a silent contemplation of his desk-phone. "We'll just release the binding-posts on our transmitter a little, and, let's say, keep the electrode-bearing a trifle slack—fix things up, I mean, so any voice will sound as tinny as a phonograph—decompose it, so to speak. Then, if necessary, we can lay it to the fact that the wires are out of order somewhere!"

"Good, but when—when can we do it?"

Durkin paced the room, with his old-time restless, animal-like stride, while Mame readjusted her receiver and restlessly took her seat in the wicker rocker once more.

"This is Friday. That leaves Saturday night the only possible night for the —er— the invasion. Then, you see, we get a whole day for a margin. First, we've got to find out exactly what time Ottenheimer himself leaves the place, and whether it's Phipps, or some one else, who closes up, and just what time he does it."

"They close at half-past five on

Saturdays. Ottenheimer has already made an engagement for to-morrow, about five, at the Waldorf, with an importer, to doctor up an invoice for the benefit of the treasury department."

"We could make that do; though, of course, any one in his office would be more likely to suspect a call from the Waldorf, being a public place. You must find out, definitely, this afternoon just who it is closes up to-morrow. Then we must get hold of some little business detail or two, to fling in at him, in case he has any suspicions."

"That shouldn't be so very difficult. Though I do wish you could get something nearer Ottenheimer's voice!"

"I'll have a rehearsal or two alone—though I guess we can muffle up that 'phone to suit our purpose. My last trouble, now, is to find out how I'm going to get through those two doors, without powder."

Again he fell to pacing the little room with his abstracted stride, silently testing contingency after contingency, examining and rejecting the full gamut of possibilities. Sometimes he stood before the woman with the receiver, staring at her with vacant and unseeing eyes; at other times, he paced between her and the window. Then he paused before the little green coils of wire that stretched across the room. He studied them with involuntary and childish movements of the head and hands. Then he suddenly stood erect, ran to the back window, and flung it open.

"My God, I've got it!" he cried, running back to where the woman still sat, listening, "I've got it!"

"How?" she asked, catching her breath.

"I've got to eat my way through what may be, for all I know, a full inch of Harveyized steel. I've got to burrow and work through it in some way, haven't I? It has to be done quickly, too. I've got to have power, strong power."

He stopped suddenly, and seemed to be working out the unmastered details in his own mind, his eyes bent on a little shelf in one corner of the room.

"Have you ever seen an electric fan? You see this shelf, up here in the corner? Well, at one time an electric fan stood there—see, here are the remnants of the wires. It stood there whirling away at three hundred revolutions a minute, and with no more power than it takes to keep an ordinary office-lamp alight. Right at the back of this house is a wire, a power-circuit, alive with more than two hundred times that voltage, with power in plenty—a little condensed Niagara of power—asking to be taken off and made use of!"

"But what use?"

"I can capture and tame and control that power, Mame. I can make it my slave and carry it along with me, almost in my pocket, on a mere thread of wire. I can make it a living, iron-eating otter, with a dozen fangs—in the shape of quarter-inch drills, gnawing and biting and eating through that armor-plate door about the same as a rat would gnaw through a wooden lath. Oh, we've got them, Mame! We've got them this time!"

"Not until we know that combination, though," qualified the colder-thoughted woman in the wicker rocker, still not quite understanding how the other had found so potent and so unexpected an ally.

V

In the paling afternoon, with a pearl-mist of fine rain thinly shrouding the city, Mame waited for Durkin impatiently with her watch open before her. As the frail steel hand, implacable as fate, sank away toward the half-hour mark, her own spirits sank with it. It was not often Durkin was late. Another ten minutes would make him forever too late. She debated within herself whether or not she should risk her own voice over the wire to Ottenheimer's office, while there was yet time, or wait it out to the last. Then she remembered, to her sudden horror, that the transmitter still stood in its perfect and normal condition, that

there could be no muffling, incompetent mechanism to disguise the tones of her voice.

She was still beating despairingly through a tangle of dubious possibilities when the reassuring two-three ring of the door-bell sounded out, through the quiet of the lonely twilight, with startling clearness. A minute later Durkin came panting into the room. He was clean-shaven, silk-hatted, immaculate, and most painfully out of breath.

"Is there time?" he gasped, putting down a heavy suit-case and peeling off his frock-coat as he spoke.

"It's twenty-one minutes after five. If Phipps is punctual, that gives you only four minutes."

By this time Durkin had the suit-case open. In another half-minute he had the casing off the transmitter. Then a deft turn or two with his screw-driver, a tentative touch or two on the electrode, and in another half-minute the casing was restored, and he was gently tapping on the diaphragm of the transmitter, with the receiver at his ear, testing the sound.

"Just a minute now, till I cool down, and get my breath. I had endless trouble getting my drill apparatus—at one time I thought I'd have to take a dentist's tooth-driller or some such thing. But I got what I wanted—that's what kept me. Anything new?"

He turned, with the receiver still at his ear, and for the first time looked at her closely. Her face seemed pale and a little weary-looking against her black street-gown, the shadowy wistfulness about her eyes seemed more marked than ever.

"Yes," she was laughing back at him, however, "something most prodigious has happened. I have an order for one dozen cotillon-favors, to be done in velvet and crimson satin, and delivered next Saturday afternoon!"

Durkin himself laughed, shortly, and faced the telephone, once more, asking her how time was.

"You haven't a second to lose."

His own face was a little paler than usual as he stood before the transmitter

while Mame, with her watch in her hand, went on saying that, if Phipps was punctual, he would be out and away in one minute's time.

Durkin took a last look round, said, under his breath, "Well, here goes!" and placed the receiver to his ear.

The next minute, the bell tinkled out briskly, authoritatively, with a metallic and dispassionate peremptoriness. For a moment, too, Mame, watching him with half-parted lips, was haunted with the sudden impression that she had lived through the scene before, that each move and sound was in some way second-hand to her inner consciousness, older than time itself, a blurred and dateless photograph on the plates of memory.

"Hello! hello! Is that you Phipps?" she heard him say, and his voice sounded thin and far away. There was a pause—it seemed an endless pause—and he repeated the query, louder. "This is Ottenheimer. Yes, something wrong with the 'phone. Don't cable Teetzel—I say, don't cable Teetzel about those canary diamonds, until you see me. Yes, Teetzel. Did you get that? Well—er—what the devil's our safe-combination? Yes; yes; Ottenheimer!"

"Slower—slower, Jim!" moaned Mame, behind him.

"Combination's slipped my mind, Phipps. Yes; after dinner; want to run down and look over the books. Louder, please; I can't hear. Yes, that's better. To the right three times, to seventy-four—back thirty—on eighty-two—back one hundred and eight—and on seven. Yes. It's the second last figure slipped me. Better close up now. Better close up, I say. All right. Good-bye."

The bell tinkled and grew still. The last minute vibration ebbed out of the transmitter's tingling diaphragm; but still neither the listening man nor woman moved. They waited, tense, expectant, tossed between doubt and hope, knowing only too well that the questioning tinkle of that little, polished, nickel bell would sound the signal of their absolute and irreparable defeat.

Second by second, a minute dragged itself away. Then another, and another, and still no call came from Ottenheimer's office for central. The woman moved a little, restlessly. The man sighed deeply. Then he slowly put down the receiver, and mopped his moist forehead and face.

"I think he's safe," half whispered Durkin, with his eyes still on the transmitter.

"He may suspect, any moment, though—when he has had time to think it over, especially."

"I rather doubt it. Our voices were nothing but broken squeaks. But, if he does ring up central, we'll have to risk it and jump in and claim a wire's crossed somewhere."

Then he repeated the strange formula: "To the right three times, to seventy-four—back thirty—on eighty-two—back one hundred and eight—and on seven. Can you get it down, Mame?"

She nodded, as she wrote it, in pencil, on a slip of paper. This he placed in his waistcoat pocket, and mopped his face once more, laughing—perhaps a little hysterically, as he felt the passing minutes drip relievingly, like the softest of balm, on his strained nerves.

"And now what?" asked Mame, sharing his relief, as she went to the window and breathed the fresh air that blew in through the low-ceilinged little room.

"Now," said Durkin, jubilantly, "now we begin our real work!" He opened his suit-case, and handed her a heavy, cylindrical, steel implement. Into one end of this odd-looking tool he slipped and clamped a slender, polished little shaft of grooved steel.

"That's what nearly lost me everything," he continued, carefully unpacking, as he spoke, a condenser, a tangent galvanometer, a pair of linesman's gloves, a Warner pocket battery-gauge, a pair of electrician's scissors and pliers, two or three coils of wire, half-a-dozen pony glass insulators and a handful or two of smaller tools.

"Here, you see, is what I set up business with," he soliloquized, as he

studied the litter they made on the floor. He looked up quickly as Mame drew her little table out from the wall and lifted the transmitter up on the empty electric-fan shelf. "Er—before I forget it," he said, absently, his eyes still on his widely-strewn apparatus, "have you got everything you want away from here?"

She had; though she hated to leave her show-case, she said. Some day she might like to take up fancy-sewing again. "But before we do another thing," she insisted, "we have got to have dinner. Breakfast this morning was our last meal, I know!"

And to his utter astonishment Durkin remembered that he was famished!

It was a hurried and humble little meal they ate together in the failing light—a meal of sandwiches washed down with bottled claret. Their thoughts, as they ate, however, were on other things, grappling with impending problems, wondering when and under what circumstances their next meal would be eaten, almost glorying in the very uncertainty of their future, tingling with the consciousness of the trial they were to undergo, of the hazard they essayed. Then Durkin, as he smoked, laid out his final plan of action, point by premeditated point.

VI

At twenty minutes to eleven, slipping off his shoes, Durkin climbed cautiously through the transom opening out on the roof. Creeping as carefully from chimney-tier to chimney-tier, he found himself face to face with a roof-fence of sharpened iron rods. He counted down this fence to the eighteenth rod, then carefully lifted on it. The lead that sealed it in the lower cross-piece, and the stone beneath that again, had been strangely fused away, and the loosened rod slid up through the top horizontal bar, very much like a miniature portcullis. Squeezing through this narrow opening, he carefully replaced the rod behind him.

With the flattened piece of steel, once used for a furnace-poker, and looking very much like a gigantic tack-drawer, he slowly and gently forced the bolt that held shut the transom on the Ottenheimer building. This he replaced, after passing through, paying out with him, as he went, two coils of rubber-coated wire, in appearance not unlike a large size of incandescent lamp-cord.

From the photographer's studio in which he found himself, nothing but a draw-bolt kept him from an outside hallway. Making sure that the building was deserted, and everything safe, he worked his way slowly down, stair by stair, to the basement. Here he made a careful study of the little tunnel of electric wires at the back of the lower hall, probing, testing, measuring, and finally, with cool deliberation, cutting every wire that in any way looked like a burglar-alarm connection, taking care to leave only the lighting circuit intact. Then, holding before him his little two-candle incandescent lamp, scarcely bigger than his thumb-nail, he groped toward the iron-covered door that divided one half of the building from the other.

Here he directed his thin shaft of light into the crack between the heavy door and its studding, and his squinting eyes made out the iron lock-bar that held him out. From his vest pocket, where they stood in a row like glimmering pencils, he took out one of the slim steel drills, adjusted it noiselessly in the drill-flange, and snapped shut his switch. There was the quick spit of a blue spark, and, of a sudden, the inanimate thing of steel throbbed and sang and quivered with mysterious life. As he glanced down at it, in its fierce revolutions, he realized that once more he had for an accomplice that old-time, silent and ever-ready assistant which for years had been a well-tested and faithful friend. The mere companionship with so familiar a force brought back to him his waning confidence.

He forced the whirling drill through the door crack and in against the bar. It ate through the soft iron as though it had been a bar of cheese. Eight

carefully placed perforations, side by side, had severed the end of the lock-shaft. He shut off the current, confidently, and swung open the heavy door. The falling piece of iron made a little tinkle of sound on the cement flooring, then all was silence again. He had at least, he told himself, captured the enemies' outposts.

Cautiously, he felt his way across the warm cellar, up the steps, and at last faced his one defiant barrier, the door of solid steel, abutted by even more solid masonry. The builders of that door had done their best to make it forbidding to men of his turn of mind, Durkin ruminated, as he felt and sounded and tested despondently over its taciturn painted surface.

He studied the hinges carefully, with his tiny lamp. They were impregnable. As he had surmised, his only way was to cut out, inch by inch, the three heavy steel shafts, or bolt-bars, which slipped and fitted into steel casings, also apparently embedded in solid masonry.

Adjusting his drill, he closed the switch once more, and, bracing the instrument's head against his breast-bone, watched the slender, humming spinning shaft bite and grind and burrow its way into the slowly yielding bar. From a little pocket-can, every minute or two, he squirted kerosene in on the drill tip. The pungent smell of the scorching oil as it spread on the heated steel rose almost suffocatingly to his nostrils, in the furnace-heated warmth of the cellar, and for weeks afterward remained an indistinct and odious memory to him.

When his first hole was bored, and his little drill raced wildly through into space, like the screw of a liner on the crest of a wave, he started a second close beside the first; then a third, and a fourth, and a fifth, slowly honey-combing the thick steel with his minute excavations. Sometimes a drill would snap off short, and he would have to draw a fresh one from his stock. Sometimes it did not bite sharply, and he tried another. And still he stood drilling, directing the

power of his silent, insidious, untiring accomplice whose spirit sighed and burned itself out through the wire at his feet.

As he worked, he lost all track of time; after he had started what he knew would be the last hole, he stopped and looked at his watch, as casually as he had done often enough after a night of operating the key in a despatcher's office. To his horror, he saw that it had stopped, stunned with a natural enough electrolytic paralysis. It might not yet be twelve, or it might be four in the morning; time, from the moment he had taken off his shoes in Mabel Chandler's little back room, had been annihilated to him. He wondered, in sudden alarm, if she were still keeping up her patrol outside, up and down the block. He wondered, too, as he drove the little drill home for the last time and cautiously pried open the great, heavy door, if she had sent any signal in from the street-front, and he had missed it. He even wondered if daylight would not overtake them at their work—when his startled eyes, chancing to fall on a near-by clock-dial, saw that the hour was only twenty-five minutes to twelve!

Step by step, he crept back to the inner offices, followed by the murmurous ticking of a dozen noisy clocks declaiming his presence. From the floor in front of where the safe stood, gloomy, ominous, impregnable-looking, he lifted a seemingly innocent rubber mat. As he thought, it had been attached to a burglar-alarm apparatus. Dropping on one knee, he repeated his formula, number by number, each time listening for the tell-tale click of the wards. Then, turning the nickel lock-knob, he heard the many-barred lock chuck back into place.

The next moment, the ponderous doors were open, and Durkin's little thumb-nail electric lamp was exploring the tiers of inner compartments.

He still carried his drill with him; and, once he had found the private drawer he wanted, the softer iron of the inner fittings offered little resistance to a brutally impatient one-eighth

bit. After two minutes of feverish work, he was able to insert the point of his furnace-poker into the drawer, and firmly but gently pry it open.

The next moment his blackened and oily fingers were rummaging carelessly through a fortune or two of unset stones, through little trays of different-tinted diamonds, through crowded little cases of Ceylon pearls and Uralian emeralds. At last, in a smaller compartment, marked "I. Ottenheimer," he found the little gun-metal case, sealed up in an envelope. The case itself, however, was securely locked. Durkin hesitated for one-half second; then he forced the lid open with his screw-driver.

One look was enough. It held the Blue Pear.

He stooped and carefully brushed up the steel cuttings under his shoeless feet. As carefully, he closed the inner drawers of the safe. His hand was on the nickel lock-knob once more, to swing the ponderous outer doors shut, when a sound fell on his ears, a sound that made his very blood chill and tingle and chill again through all his tense body.

It was Mame's voice, inside the same building in which he stood, not a hundred feet away from him—her voice shrilly screaming for help.

His first mad impulse was to rush out to her, blindly. A second precautionary flash of thought kept him rooted to the spot where he stood, listening. He could hear confused, sharp voices, and the scuffling of feet. He heard the quick scream again; then guttural, angry protests. Some subliminal prompting told Durkin that scream was not one of terror, but of warning.

Snapping out his incandescent lamp, he stole cautiously forward through the row of partitioned, heavily-carpeted little offices, and, without showing himself, peered toward the shop-front. As he did so, a second involuntary thrill of apprehension sped up and down his backbone. The street door itself was open. Already half-way in through that door was a dark,

stoutly-built man. He stood struggling in the arms of a determined and desperate young woman. That woman, Durkin, could see, was Mame. And all the while she was clinging to him and holding him, she was crying lustily for help. The next moment Durkin made out the man. It was Ottenheimer himself. For some unknown reason, he hastily surmised, the diamond-merchant had intended to drop into his own office. But why, he still asked, was Mame taking such risks?

Durkin did not try to work the thing out in its minute details. Like a flash, he darted back to the open safe. He swung the big doors to, locked them, caught up his drill and loose strands of wire, and then backed quickly out through the steel door, securing it with a deft twist or two of a piece of "No. 12." The outer cellar door he as quickly closed after him.

Then he flew up-stairs, two steps at a time, rebolted the photographer's hall-door, replaced the transom as he swung up through it, and as hurriedly refitted the loose iron bar in the roof-fencing.

Three minutes later, a well-dressed gentleman, wearing a silk hat and carrying a large leather suit-case, stopped, with a not unnatural curiosity, on his way up Fifth avenue to inquire the meaning of an excited little crowd that clustered about two policemen and a woman in the doorway of Isaac Ottenheimer & Company.

He drew up, casually enough, and listened while a short, stout, and very indignant man spluttered and gesticulated and angrily demanded how any one should dare to stop him from going into his own store. He was the owner of the place—there was his own watchman to identify him.

The young woman, who chanced to be veiled, explained in her well-modulated, rich contralto voice that the hour had seemed so unusual, the store had looked so dark inside, even the burglar-alarm, she stubbornly insisted, had rung so loudly, that, naturally, it had made her suspicious.

She was sorry if it was a mistake. But now the officers were there they could attend to it—if some one would kindly call a carriage for her.

The sergeant at her elbow agreed with her, and stopping an empty motor-cab on its way up the Avenue, turned back to the enraged owner of the store, and solicitously advised him to go home and cool down.

"You hold that woman!" demanded Ottenheimer, husky with rage. "You hold that woman, till I examine these premises!"

The young woman, obviously, and also quite naturally, objected to being held. There was a moment of puzzled silence, and then a murmur of disapproval from the crowd, for about the carefully gloved girl in the black street-gown and plumed hat clung that nameless touch of birth and bearing which marked her as a person who would be more at home in a brougham than in a wind-swept doorway.

"The lady, of course, will wait!" quietly but deliberately suggested the silk-hatted man with the suit-case, looking casually in over the circling crowd of heads.

The sergeant turned, sharply, glaring out his sudden irritability.

"Now, who asked you to butt in on this?" he demanded, as he impatiently elbowed the pressing crowd further out into a wider circle.

"I merely suggested that the lady

wait!" repeated the man in the silk hat, as imperturbed as before.

"Of course, officer, I shall wait, willingly," said the girl, hurriedly, in her low-noted, rich contralto. She drew her skirts about her timidly, merely asking the shop-owner to make his search as quickly as possible.

Ottenheimer and the dubious-minded sergeant disappeared into the gloom of the midnight store. As the whole floor flowered into sudden electric luminousness, Durkin thanked his stars that he had had sense enough to leave the lighting wires intact.

"Everything's all right; you may go, miss," said the sergeant, two minutes later. "I guess old Isaac's had an early nightmare!" And the dispersing crowd laughed sympathetically.

The woman stepped into the motor-cab and turned toward Broadway. Safely round the corner, she picked up the waiting Durkin.

"That was a close one—but we win!" he murmured, jubilantly.

The woman at his side, for some vague reason, could not share in his joy. Intuitively, in that moment of exhaustion, she felt that their triumph, at the most, was a mere conspiracy of indifference on the part of a timeless and relentless destiny. And in the darkness of the carriage she put her ineffectual arms about Durkin, passionately, as though such momentary guardianship might shield him for all time to come.



HAD TO COME ACROSS

GUEST—Waiter, bring me a tiptop dinner. You know what that means, don't you?

WAITER—Yes, sah. It's one that you top off with a tip.



BURSLEY—He claims to be related to you, and says he can prove it.

FLOYD—The man's a fool.

"That may be a mere coincidence."

THE WAY OF IT

SHE kept his flowers, and in a book
 She pressed them, with a written date
 To show him, ere his leave he took,
 That *she* had felt, at any rate.

He knew her tears were falling, while
 He ground his teeth, and turned away,
 Lifting his hat, with one hard smile—
 Even "good-bye" he did not say.

No date he wrote, he kept no flower,
 He made no sign of heart's regret.
 She thought of him—perhaps an hour—
 He still is trying to forget!

MADELINE BRIDGES.



NOT FAVORABLY IMPRESSED

GRACE—Well, what do you think of Mr. Newman?
 FLORENCE—I don't like the way he slings slang.
 "How do you think it should be slung?"



HE WASN'T IN IT

SHE—I thought you were going to marry her.
 HE—That was my intention, but I was out-talked.
 "How's that?"
 "The other fellow had money."



DESERVED GREAT CREDIT

HE—I knew a few things before I entered society.
 SHE—Did you? Then you deserve great credit, for your success in concealing them has been phenomenal.

AN OLD MAID'S IDYLL

By Nora Alexander

MISS PRISCILLA MORTIMER was tending her roses. When she did this, she habitually looked ten years younger than usual, partly because she loved them, partly because the exertion brought a tinge of pink into her fading cheeks, and loosened little softening tendrils of hair about the outlines of her face.

Possibly it was some vague, sub-conscious recognition of her "possibilities" that attracted the attention of the squire's son as he sauntered moodily one morning through the little west-country village. He paused, and leaned over the gate.

"Good morning, Miss Priscilla," he said.

"Good morning, Mr. Ralph," she returned, with a touch of old-maidenly primness. For, although Miss Priscilla was but thirty-five, she lacked the two great essentials for the preservation of youth: she had lived much alone, and she had never loved. Her life, except for her roses, was empty.

"Very hot." The squire's son had never boasted of originality.

"Very warm," admitted Miss Priscilla, demurely.

But there was a suggestion of coolness about the slim, lilac-gowned figure, of restful stillness about the old-world garden, that, perhaps in contrast to the stormy scene in which he had just taken part, appeared suddenly desirable to the young man.

"It looks delightfully cool in your rose arbor," he said, deliberately. So palpable a hint could scarcely be ignored, but since no male being, except the curate—who scarcely counted—had ever entered that sanctum, it

was with a perceptible flutter that Miss Priscilla replied:

"You're very welcome, Mr. Ralph."

But, with the unconcern and unobservance of youth, the squire's son overlooked this detail, as he lifted the latch of the little green gate, and sauntered down the pebbled path with its bordering hollyhocks.

"May I smoke?" he asked, presently. "It's good for the roses, you know."

Miss Priscilla smiled, and the pink in her cheeks deepened.

"I should be most grateful. Would you mind moving to the other side?"

Ralph Holmwood shifted his long limbs obediently, while he lighted a cigar.

"Thank you," said Miss Priscilla. "Last year that Malmaison had greenfly, and I had a terrible business smoking it out—by lighting tobacco under a pot, you know," she added, vaguely, on the defensive.

He nodded, and smoked on in silence. He had no desire to talk, nor, apparently, moving among her roses, had Miss Priscilla—a fact concerning womankind which appeared to him in the light of a revelation.

"How's the colonel?" she inquired, perfunctorily, when at last he rose to go.

"Raging," returned his son, with laconic undutifulness, "like a bull at a fair."

She looked up, startled. It was so odd to hear the squire, with his dignified aloofness, spoken of in this coolly intimate fashion. Somehow, it gave her a vague sense of comradeship with the blond, devil-may-care young man at her side, and the suspicion of

a smile crept into her gray eyes. But she checked it severely as, perhaps half unconsciously, she checked most natural impulses. It is a habit of the lonely.

"You must have been very—" she began, and hesitated.

"Naughty," prompted her visitor, genially.

Miss Priscilla pursed up her lips. "Of course, it's not for me to say," she replied, with a relapse into her old-maidenly primness.

Ralph Holmwood surveyed her for a moment, with all the critical candor of youth. Then he threw away his cigar.

"Perhaps I had better come again?" he suggested, abruptly, his blue eyes twinkling. "I am not returning to town just yet, and—it will save you further trouble with the tobacco and the flower-pot, you know."

There was a pause.

"Yes, that is quite true," admitted Miss Priscilla, at last.

And that was how it all began.

II

RALPH HOLMWOOD swung down the hollyhock-bordered path with an easy air of something like proprietorship. Many months had slipped away, and during that time he had acquired something beyond the right to suffocate the too-obtrusive greenfly with expensive cigars. Just what he had acquired, or wished to acquire, was a matter for heated debate among the villagers. Also, what Miss Priscilla "meant by it," was another question calling, not so much for debate, as for unqualified disapproval. For a person, and that person a woman, to be, as Mrs. Symons, the village oracle, expressed it, "a-growin' back'ards," was obviously flying in the face of Providence, and it was an undeniable fact that, in some mysterious way, Miss Priscilla Mortimer was renewing her youth. It was not only that the tendrils of soft brown hair had ceased to be severely confined, or that her

gowns had acquired a certain added daintiness and charm; it was the self-evident fact that her face had grown less thin, her eyes brighter and the curve of her lips more flexible. There were other and subtler changes, but of these the villagers took no note. The explanation was, in reality, simple enough. She had been looking at life through the eyes of youth—generous-hearted, impulsive, sympathetic youth—and the reflection of youth's glory had fallen upon her. It was, however, but a reflection, and she knew it. Therein lay at once her wisdom and her sorrow, and the inalienable pathos of love.

Meantime, beneath the gorgeous July sunshine, Ralph Holmwood stood watching her in silence. There was a touch of gravity about him to-day, a lack of that light-hearted spontaneity which was his most marked characteristic.

"How you love those roses of yours!" he broke out, suddenly.

"One must love something," said Miss Priscilla, with a hint almost of apology in her voice, "and—I never cared for cats."

He looked at her, long and thoughtfully. Miss Priscilla grew pink.

"Why cats?" he wondered. Suddenly, his brows contracted, and he took a step toward her.

"I wish you wouldn't talk nonsense," he said.

She laughed—such a soft, happy little laugh, and straightway looked younger than ever.

"I am nearly old enough to be your mother."

"Rubbish!" he answered, shortly.

"Well, an elder sister."

"Nonsense!"

Miss Priscilla laughed again.

"At any rate," she began, "I am old enough to give you some very excellent advice, if——"

But the young man moved abruptly away toward the rose arbor. "Come," he called, presently.

And, as she came, he kissed one of her favorite Malmaison roses, and held it out to her.

"I don't want you in either of those capacities," he said. "I want you for my wife, Priscilla."

He took her slim white hands in his, and looked down into her eyes. And, for one long moment, he saw in them all the light and the glory and the fire of youth. For there was given to Miss Priscilla only that one moment in which to crush the emotion of a lifetime. The next, her eyelids fell, and, drawing away her hands, she stooped and picked a spray of the little purple flowers growing at her feet.

"They call it 'lad's love,'" she said, very gently, placing it in his open palm.

He drew back, stung.

"What do you mean?"

"Don't you see?" she whispered, and her voice was low and stricken, though steady. "You have the gift of the gods, and I—am old."

"But I love you," he pleaded, "and love, my Priscilla, knows no laws."

She shook her head.

"Not at first, perhaps," she answered, with the paradise-closing wisdom of her age, "but afterward——"

She shrank from finishing the sentence.

Yet her eyes, as she watched him by-and-bye go down the sunlit path, were not altogether sad. She was learning the greatest of all lessons—that fullness of life comes only with sorrow.

III

MISS PRISCILLA was out, the little maid informed him, and Ralph, with a muttered, "All right, I'll wait," brushed past her, and entered the cozy, fire-lit room. And there was that in his face and bearing which caused even slow-witted Jemima Ann to follow his progress open-mouthed.

When Miss Priscilla found him, an hour later, it was with his face buried in the curve of his elbow as he leaned forward on the table, and the womanhood in her rushed out to him in a flood that swept all barriers before it.

"Ralph! Ralph!" she cried, remembering nothing but his great need, "let me help you! Ah! let me help you!"

He lifted his haggard young face.

"You can't," he said, dully, his horizon bounded by his own pain, and seeing nothing of hers, the pain of a great, helpless love. Yet, a moment later, he added, in his boyish way:

"But you're a brick."

"Let me be one really," she pleaded.

He pulled himself together, and sat straight up in his chair.

"I am going away—for ever. I wonder," regarding her with hard young eyes, "I wonder what you would say if you knew all."

"All what?" she asked.

"My manifold sins and wickednesses."

She looked at him. Hitherto, she had held him by all that was best in him, by the chivalrous, generous-hearted, simple side of his nature and his youth. Now, in some dim way, she knew this to be gone, overlaid, crushed by some tragedy of evil. And her simple, childlike soul shrank from the knowledge of that other side of him. Then her heart cried out, "Tell me—tell me all!"

She did not know it was the last, despairing cry of womanhood, the cry that bids one keep a hold upon the loved one, even if it be but by his vices. For Priscilla Mortimer loved Ralph Holmwood as it is only given to those who have known long loneliness of soul to love the young. Coming old to the fount, our thirst is the greater, and we drink the deeper; but we grow the stronger. This was one of the truths that Miss Priscilla had learned in these days of her awakening to life.

There was much in his enlightenment that left her unenlightened still, so remote from the world, and the ill that is in it, had the path of her existence wound. But out of that broken, incoherent confession, she gleaned the one dominant fact—he had a debt of honor that he could not meet, and his father had disinherited him.

For a moment, when he had ceased speaking, she stood quite still beside

his chair, the light of a great joy in her eyes. Then she said, simply:

"You shall have the money—in a week, if that will be soon enough."

He stared at her.

"But—but—" he began, blankly, "I thought you were— How can *you* lend me three thousand pounds? And—and—" his face fell swiftly back into despair—"I couldn't repay it, not——"

"Don't hurt me like that," she said. "But, if it will comfort you, then we'll agree that if your father should repent, which he certainly will do, you shall repay me when you come into your own."

So Ralph Holmwood went out into the world, and Miss Priscilla remained behind, alone.

IV

WHEN, after an absence of twenty years, Ralph Holmwood returned home to claim his own, he vaguely expected that the rose garden, and, more important still, its owner, would have remained unchanged. He himself felt much the same, and, indeed, as he passed through the little, sunshiny village to-day, tall, erect, his handsome blond head held as high as of yore, and bearing his two-and-forty years with a singular lightness, there was much in him to remind one of the youth of two-and-twenty.

But suddenly, with a quick exclamation of dismay, he pulled himself up and stood very still, while memories crowded thick and fast, and the chill of remorse fell upon him. For the rose garden was a rose garden no longer, only a tangle of weeds, grass-grown and moss-covered. Had she left? Was that the explanation? Or was she——?

But at that moment the French windows opened, and she stepped out into the sunshine—a tall, angular figure, poorly clad in an ill-cut gown, with features thinned and sharpened, and eyes that had grown dim. She sat down in what had once been the rose arbor, and, unfolding the heavy piece of work she carried, commenced to stitch at the elaborate embroideries—to stitch in

that set, mechanical, ceaseless way that tells its own tale even to the most casual observer.

And, in a flash, Ralph Holmwood understood; and the knowledge sent him swiftly back to the stately pile of buildings he called "home," with a cheque in his breast-pocket, that seemed to lie like a patch of flame across his heart.

She had given him her all, and he—oh, God! was there no way out? Then his mind went back to a scene in the rose arbor twenty years ago. What was it she had said? "Not at first, perhaps, but afterward—" She had shrunk, he remembered, from finishing the sentence, from picturing the reality that lay before them now—now that he was still young, and she——

But, because he was indeed the same lad who had bidden her good-bye those twenty years ago, that swiftly-born knowledge sent him back to her before another sun had set. And, as he stepped into the little, flowerless sitting-room, the sense of its emptiness and bareness smote upon him with so keen and poignant a distress that Miss Priscilla divined in an instant that her secret was hers no longer. A just perceptible quiver passed over her face. Then she smiled—the smile of a woman who has learned the secret of life.

"Priscilla," he said, with grave directness, "I asked you a question twenty years ago. I have come to ask it again to-day."

The old, worn hands, folded on the shabby alpaca gown, trembled.

"Thank God!" she whispered.

He laid his strong brown ones upon them. "Thank you, Priscilla," he said, very gently.

Her hands lay still beneath his, but she lifted her eyes, those toil-dimmed eyes.

"I meant," she explained, simply, "that you're the same lad to-day as you were twenty years ago. It's what I've craved so to be sure of—to know that the good was the real thing, and the other—only a phase. It's so long, you see, since your letters ceased to come."

"Dearest of women," and his voice, in face of the unspoken thing beneath her words, had lost its steadiness, "dearest of women, you will let me—try to make up—a little?"

The warm glow about her heart faded as she drew away her hand.

"Twenty years ago," she said, "it was a lad's love. To-day, it is man's pity. Dear, I am richer for both, though I—can take—neither."

He sprang to his feet in an access of helpless remorse.

"But what can I do?" he cried. "Priscilla, think what I did—" And his eyes went swiftly out to the deserted garden.

"You emptied my life of roses—yes," she admitted with infinite gentleness, "but you filled it with love—*mother* love."

And, with the lie on her lips, she smiled up at him bravely; and, oh, it is hard to be brave when one is old and tired! Then she gave him the balm he needed.

"And you shall fill it with roses again now, if you will. So I shall be doubly rich."

But afterward, when he had gone, she wept the slow, heavy tears of lonely old age. Then she crept out to the little patch of garden that alone was tended—the patch where the lad's love grew.



IN MEMORY'S GARDEN

THERE is a garden in the twilight lands
Of Memory, where troops of butterflies
Flutter adown the cypress paths, and bands
Of flowers mysterious droop their drowsy eyes.

There, through the silken hush, come footfalls faint
And hurried through the vague parterre; and sighs
Whispering of rapture or of sweet complaint,
Like ceaseless parle of bees and butterflies.

Here, by one lonely pathway, steal I soon,
To find the flowerings of the old delight
Our hearts together knew, when lo! the moon
Turns all the cypress alleys into white.

THOMAS WALSH.



LOOKING ON THE BRIGHT SIDE

THE HUSBAND—My dear, I am fool enough to think that I could sit down and write a popular novel.

THE WIFE—Oh, cheer up! You may be fool enough to think so, Archibald, but you are not fool enough to do it.

IN APRIL

WHY, bless me! it's raining again!
 So glad that I brought an umbrella!
 I'm a sight—wet and muddy—but, then,
 I think I'll look in on Marcella.

So glad that I brought an umbrella!
 Whew! now it is coming in sheets.
 I think I'll look in on Marcella,
 Her Tuesdays are genuine treats!

Whew! now it *is* coming in sheets!
 Five minutes ago it was sunny.
 Her Tuesdays are genuine treats—
 Marcella! Nice girl—and some money.

Five minutes ago it was sunny!
 Yes, April's capricious, I know.
 Marcella! Nice girl—and some money.
 The house is the fourth in the row.

Yes, April's capricious, I know.
 The rain's stopped, the ghostly fog thickens.
 The house is the fourth in the row. . . .
 Not home, and not Tuesday? The dickens!

The rain's stopped, the ghostly fog thickens.
 A cab? There's not one in a mile!
 Not *home*, and not *Tuesday*! The dickens!
 Coming out wasn't half worth my while.

A cab? There's not one in a mile!
 I'll walk—to the club and play billiards.
 Coming out wasn't half worth my while.
 'D give cents if I'd not stopped at Hilliard's.

I'll walk to the club, and play billiards.
 Perhaps it will clear by-and-bye.
 'D give cents if I'd not stopped at Hilliard's.
 By Jove! there's a glimpse of blue sky.

Perhaps it will clear by-and-bye.
 I'll whistle—it's better than whining.
 By Jove! there's a glimpse of blue sky;
 The sun will be presently shining.

I'll whistle—it's better than whining.
 I'm a sight—wet and muddy—but then
 The sun will be presently shining—
 Why, bless me! it's *raining* again!

EDWARD W. BARNARD.

THE GENEROSITY OF JOHN THOMKINS

By Elizabeth Duer

I HAD no especial hatred for John Thomkins when I left him, but I am a fastidious person, and I simply could not stand him another moment.

He made his money in leaf-lard, and my friends had persuaded me to go into a matrimonial copartnership with him for the purpose of showing him how to live up to his bank-account. I was well connected, poor, and twenty-four—old enough, one would think, to know what I was undertaking. But, all the same, I did not; and the hideousness of being married to a man I did not love, whose ways made life one long irritation, nearly drove me insane. At the end of twelve months I ran away, taking nothing with me except my clothes and such jewels as I had before he married me. And I left a note to say that he need not look for me, that I preferred to support myself, and that he could get a divorce on the ground of desertion.

There was no man in the case, and there never will be. I despise the whole sex except the man in the moon, whose heart is extinct and whose surface is polished. John's attributes were otherwise.

In these days, when the best is none too good for everybody, the question of self-support is narrowed down to something you can do well, and, as a general thing, the accomplishments of women of the upper classes fall short of the standard of excellence. I could sing a little, play a little, speak French and German—with an accent neither Parisian nor Hanoverian—and administer a house with judgment.

"Be a visiting housekeeper," said

my cousin, Mrs. Brown, with whom I had taken temporary refuge in New York.

"I could not control metropolitan servants," I said, thinking of the trials I had had, even in Chicago.

"Be companion to an invalid," said Bessie Brown, and her voice said more. It said, "Be anything, rather than worry me."

I was unpacking my trunks, and the trays were spread out on the floor. Bessie had not offered the services of her maid.

"How well you pack," she said, patronizingly.

"I do," I responded, and sprang to my feet, tense with sudden resolution.

"I'll be a packer!" I exclaimed.

"A very good idea," she said, with relief. "Don't take anything more out of your trunks, for Ferdinand"—Ferdinand is Mr. Brown—"has a pull with the management of the Waldegrave, and could get you there on trial, even if they should have such a person already."

"I couldn't take the bread out of another woman's mouth," I began, tremulously, but she cut me short.

"You will never do anything, if you fold your hands in my spare bedroom."

When I entertained Bessie in Chicago before my father died, at the time of the Exposition, I didn't make her feel that she was occupying my only spare room, though she did stay twice as long as the time I had named, but sometimes I think the Western heart is larger than the Eastern.

Bessie has practical brains, and she secured the place she promised; she also advised me how to make the most

of my advantages, which were, after all, only a certain prettiness in manners and appearance and the Ferdinand Brown backing.

That particular hotel is always full of women from all parts of this continent, who consider a fortnight in New York at the Waldegrave equal to a social education—with the added zest of dazzling the home circle on their return with a brand-new outfit of clothes and cosmetics.

"You must wear your rings," said Bessie, "and keep your hands in order, and do your hair in the latest style, and dress well. Then you must pack with sachets of your own particular perfume, and impress your patronesses with the especial *cachet* it gives to their toilettes. And you must work up a commission business with trunk people, and dressmakers and *corsettières*—indeed, with all such tradespeople—and you must excite the desire of your ladies for endless things at the last moment, to be forwarded C. O. D., so that you will get your commission without risk. Praise the hotel while you pack; declare you have seen all the well-known women of fashion lunching there that very day, and that Mrs. Blank—choose any grand name—was wearing the duplicate of the costume you are putting in the trunk. The success of the hotel depends upon the strangers who patronize it, and their coming depends upon the fashion of New York."

"Am I to live in the hotel?" I asked, with some depression. Her sketch of the astuteness necessary to success in my occupation, bewildered me.

"Of course not!" she snapped. "How could you afford to pay for a room in the Waldegrave? Take a hall-bedroom, with board somewhere in the neighborhood, and I don't mind your coming here to luncheon occasionally, when I'm alone."

When you set out to earn your bread, it is not worth while to have feelings. I could bear Bessie's brutality better than John Thomkins's affectionateness.

All this happened three years ago,

and this December sees me with a Business, deserving that initial capital B, and money in the bank. I am broker for two dressmakers, a hairdresser, a shoemaker, a trunk firm—to say nothing of half the great shops; purveyor of fallals and adviser in general to the ambitious daughters of all the states in the Union who visit the Waldegrave, in order to add the glamour of style to the framework of woman.

It was two weeks before Christmas, and a busy day. I had two ladies to pack for besides some errands in the shops, and the thermometer stood at ten degrees, which paralyzes the ambition. As I dressed in the early morning, I remembered it was my birthday. I was twenty-eight. When I was twenty-five, just before I ran away, John gave me a diamond pendant.

"Here, Margaret," he said, "I know you like pretty things, though you don't like me. It is a pity we can't hit it off better, old girl!"

Poor John! I thought of his present to-day, with no one to care how my birthdays went and came. He never bore resentment, and he deserved a kind wife in his own class of life. I was not in his class, and could not be kind to him; the kinder he was to me, the more he revolted me.

My order-book at the Waldegrave required my services at one of the most luxurious suites of rooms on the fourth floor. The lady whose trunks I was to pack was a Madame de Thompkins.

I knocked at the door of the sitting-room, and it was opened by the lady herself.

She was squarely built, with a waist so fashionably prolonged that it invaded her nether person almost to the knees. She had yellow hair, waved and fluffed all over her head, flaring light eyes, a short nose, a hard mouth, tinted scarlet, and a complexion shading to lilac.

She looked at me, inquiringly; perhaps she thought I was a guest at the hotel and had mistaken my room, for

I was without coat or hat, having left them with my good friend the house-keeper, and was ready to go to work. My clothes were impressive by intention.

"I'm the packer," I announced.

"Oh! are you?" she responded, with a short laugh. "I mistook you for a society swell. Your clothes are so smart that I am afraid you won't think I have anything worth packing." Her voice was even commoner than her words, but I was familiar with the genus, and knew how to keep my temper.

"I trust you do not think I am dressed above my occupation," I said, sweetly. "I must explain that I always wear my freshest gown when I am to handle the beautiful frocks of the ladies of the Waldegrave."

She looked complacent, almost amiable, as she took some keys from the davenport, and unlocked a bedroom door which opened on the right into the sitting-room.

"Come in here," she said, preceding me, and, fitting her keys into the various drawers and doors of the wardrobes and dressing-table, she threw everything open to my inspection.

It was indeed a scene of confusion. Three large, empty trunks stood against the wall, the bed was piled high with finery, and dressmakers' boxes were lying all over the floor.

Madame de Thompkins murmured something about my getting to work while she collected a few more things from her sleeping-room on the other side of the apartment.

"I didn't bring no maid," she said, apologetically.

She was gone perhaps fifteen minutes, and, when she reappeared, she was a moving heap of luxury and dirt. A magnificent light-blue opera-cloak hung on her arm over a bedraggled petticoat; an old, greasy, flannel dressing-gown was crushing what the milliners call a *matinée* of white lace and ribbons. They were all to be packed.

I had already sent to her rooms my leather case containing the necessities for my work, such as tissue-

paper, ribbons, scissors, pins, tacks, perfume and sachets, and, opening it, I gave her my printed schedule of prices, for I did not wish her to escape again until we had come to an agreement.

"You will please notice," I said, "that packing with violet oriza is five dollars extra."

"I am very particular about my perfumes," she answered; "I can't abide musky things."

"Then I shall do your packing in my very best style," I concluded, "just as I did it last week for the Duchess of Midgeland."

"I'll have it done first-class or not at all," she declared, with a blaze of her light eyes. "I guess there ain't many ladies in this hotel, or out of it, either, who can better afford to pay for their comfort than I can."

"I hope I shall give satisfaction," I began, "and that when you get home to——"

"Chicago," she supplied.

"—you will find everything in perfect order," I managed to conclude, for the name De Thompkins, taken in conjunction with Chicago, made my heart beat a little tattoo.

But I dismissed the suspicion with disdain. I gave John Thomkins credit for better taste; having known me, he could never decline to such a depth of vulgarity. And yet——!

While these thoughts were whirling through my brain, I was making perfunctory conversation in the familiar jargon of my profession.

"I try to simplify things for my ladies, by pinning in the top of each trunk a complete list of its contents, tray by tray. Do you happen to have any choice as to which trunk your jewel-cases go in? You seem to have a great number."

At this allusion to her treasures she made a hurried stride to the dressing-table, and then stopped, as if ashamed. While she stood irresolute, her eyes fell upon my leather case, and that seemed to confirm her sudden distrust of me. She looked upon it evidently as a cache for secreted plunder.

"You needn't pack my jewelry at all," she answered. "I always carry the stones in a chamois bag in my corsets, and the empty cases can go in this trunk. I'll just take them into the next room with me now. I hope you haven't got any of your things mixed with mine," she continued, once more glancing at my valise.

She was busy piling her jewels, with their cases, into a bandbox. I was so outraged at her insinuations that I could have beaten her, but I remembered that women, quite as respectable in appearance as I, had been guilty of crimes, so I held my peace.

There was a knock at the outer door, and Madame de Thompkins told me to go out and see what was wanted. I was not to be left alone with her jewels a second time! A hall-boy stood there with a card on a tray, and I took it from him, and carried it to my employer. I couldn't help seeing the name; it was Mr. Isador Levy.

Almost before she had read it, she went ghastly pale, and set the bandbox on the bureau so as to leave her hands free to tear the card in small pieces.

"Say I am not in the hotel," she gasped, "or, better still, say I have gone back to Chicago!" As I turned, I heard her mutter: "The brazen cheek of that man!"

He must have been waiting just outside in the passage, for before I got near enough to the boy to deliver my message, that liveried menial was pushed aside, and Mr. Isador Levy boldly advanced into the room.

A very striking-looking person he was! He had a pink-and-white complexion, a short beard and mustache that ran up his cheeks and joined his hair, which curled in a poodle crop over his head. One eye roved, but the other maintained its position close to the nose. His dress was florid in style, and he held his shoulders squared and slightly raised. His hat and stick lent grace to his attitudes.

The intrusion on his part was so unexpected that Madame de Thompkins had no time to conceal herself, but stood plainly visible through the open door.

He acknowledged my presence by bringing his heels together in a ceremonious bow, and then addressed her by slightly raising his voice.

"I heard you speak, my vriend," he said, "and I congratulate myself to catch you on the ving."

Madame de Thompkins evidently resigned herself to the inevitable, for she came into the drawing-room, carrying the bandbox in her arms, and dismissed me with a nod of her head in the direction of my work.

I was passing as quickly as I could into the bedroom, when I was nearly knocked flat by a blow from the door which Madame de Thompkins had slammed behind me by the simple expedient of a backward kick. It caught on the tail of my dress and failed to latch, and I was so irritated by her bad manners that I left it for her to attend to. If she and Mr. Levy desired privacy, they could shut the door for themselves.

Their voices reached me quite plainly.

"How dare you come here?" she asked, with passion. "If Thompkins found you here, there would be an end of everything."

"He wouldn't recognize me," was the answer. "He only saw me once in his life—the day he married you, and I stepped forward to congratulate you, and you fainted."

He laughed a chuckling laugh at the remembrance.

Her voice became more agitated.

"Oh, go!" she said, "or I'll faint again. I'm no hand at a bluff."

"Catch you betraying your interests," he sneered. "If your husband comes in, you say I am a pill-collector for Fitchtenberg," and he picked up an unpaid bill from that celebrated milliner, which lay open on the table.

I must admit that my conduct admits of no excuse, for I deliberately walked to the door and listened; for, having allowed the idea to enter my brain that the woman was John's wife, the whole thing became a tragedy to me, and the detective spirit, which lurks in us all, overwhelmed my sense of honor.

"Don't waste time," she urged. "What do you want? I gave you every cent I dared last Saturday at the matinée. I tell you, Thompkins is awful close with ready money."

"That's pad for you, my dear," he said, with real sympathy, "but I guess you find me a thousand tollars all the same, before I leave you."

"I wish you were dead!" she groaned, stamping her foot, "as dead as I thought you were when I married him!"

"It was a goot pizness for me!" he laughed. "Come now, a thousand tollars isn't much to pay to escape a charge of pigamy. Two husbands comes high, my dear!"

I did not dare stay idle any longer. If Madame de Thompkins should get rid of her tormentor and come in to see how her packing was getting on, she would have reason to distrust me, so for five minutes I worked with steam-power energy, and then went back to my eavesdropping. Some progress had been made in the blackmailing drama.

Madame de Thompkins was speaking in a snuffling tone.

"I won't give you those emeralds! I tell you I ain't had them but two weeks, and Thompkins would miss them right off. He always insures the jewelry when we travel."

"That's all right," he acquiesced. "The Valdegrave is just the place to lose emeralds. You go home to-morrow, comfortable with your husband, and leave the police to search. What you pet they won't find them?"

In all my life I had never been so close to rascality. I tried to tell myself that it was none of my business, but the vague fancy that this woman might be my successor in John's affections gave a vital interest to the occurrence that fairly unnerved me.

In the meanwhile, Levy was saying good-bye in tones of oily satisfaction, and promising his unhappy victim indemnity till—the next time! This last conclusion to his sentence moved him to a burst of merriment.

I had to think quickly if anything

were to be done before his escape. Suppose I dashed in and denounced them, what could I prove? Their word was as good as mine in denying what I had overheard; and in regard to the emeralds, Madame de Thompkins had the right to give away her own property. An ugly legal phrase about "compounding a felony" gave me a cold shiver, but I did not quite know what it meant, and I did know that it would be bad for my business to mix my name with scandals. That was not the notoriety the Waldegrave desired. So selfishness prevailed, and I did nothing.

For ten or fifteen minutes after Mr. Levy's departure there was absolute quiet in the next room; then I heard a rustling, then the snap of a box, and then a deep sigh. Evidently Madame de Thompkins was putting the case of her emeralds deep down in the bandbox, where its rifled emptiness would not challenge immediate notice.

It often happens that those willing slaves, the motor nerves, do their oft-repeated task with greater mechanical precision when detached from the guiding spirit of conscious effort. My hands were working with no guidance from my brain. That organ was absorbed in a tumult of curiosity and horror.

At the end of half an hour, Madame de Thompkins came to see how I was progressing. She had been crying, for her eyelids were fiery red and her complexion melted to the semblance of strawberry ice-cream. With perfect unconcern for my opinion, she proceeded to wash her face and make herself up anew. She had a most elaborate outfit of paint and pencils, and, by the time she had finished, no trace of tears remained.

At this juncture, the door of the sitting-room opened once more, and a man's voice called:

"Viola!"

Madame de Thompkins caught her breath and then, with an effort, answered, "I am coming," and passed into the next room.

This time she made no attempt to

shut the door, and I sank on my knees before a trunk, for I was incapable of standing. My worst fears were confirmed—the voice was that of John Thomkins!

I am never quick-witted—judgment is a slow process with me. If I could not think clearly of my responsibility in this imbroglio when I only suspected that John was a dupe, how much harder it was to determine my line of conduct when possibility became certainty!

Here was poor blundering old John married to a Jezebel who had already a scoundrel of a husband, and through greed and fear respectively the pair were engaged in robbing him, to say nothing of forcing upon him the rôle of bigamist. On the other hand, it was an ungracious task to be the means of destroying his wedded happiness a second time. If he liked this “tinted Venus,” he would hate me for opening his eyes to her misdeeds. I could see that she was much more in his style than I ever could have been. There was a buxom exuberance of figure and a flashy taste in dress that must have appealed to his rococo fancy. How his jewels palpitated on her bosom and stiffened her stumpy fingers to the knuckles! How they nestled under her double chin, and punctured the fat lobes of her ears! If she behaved herself with any kind of decency, he would never see cruelty in that tigerish mouth, or wild temper in her light eyes; his imperturbable good humor protected him from nearly everything but deception.

While I hesitated, I stole a look over my shoulder to see how the years had treated John, and instantly perceived that he had changed. He had grown thinner and older; his reddish hair was well sprinkled with white, and even the waggish expression of his turned-up nose could not disguise a look of patient unhappiness on his commonplace features.

“She is a beast to him!” I exclaimed, mentally. “I’ll go in at once and denounce her!”

And then I checked myself, for John began to speak.

“Say, Viola!”—John’s remarks were always introduced by the word “say”—“our train leaves to-morrow morning at eight, so you must fix up your affairs to-day. How much money do you want for your bills? I’m going to get a cheque cashed in the office.”

“Let me alone,” she said, crossly. “You are always fuming about money. Can’t the bills follow us to Chicago?”

“You will pay before you leave New York,” he said, doggedly. “I propose to know where I stand.”

“One would think you had to count the pennies!” she retorted. “I’m tired of having my bills pried into and money doled out as if I were a child. I want a fixed income from you, and, what’s more, I mean to have it!”

Her voice was threatening.

John was a just man as well as an amiable one.

“Easy there, Vi!” he exclaimed. “Lard ain’t behaving just right this Winter, and you have been making the fat fly a bit, but we’ll pull through all right with a little patience.”

“I’ll pull through with the money I’ve a right to expect, and you can stop that drivell about patience.”

She set her under jaw, and glared at him.

John’s forehead flushed, and he faced her as if to retort, and then plunged his hands in his pockets, and took a turn across the room and back. He seemed to have mastered his resentment, for he said, almost kindly:

“If you have spent more than you ought, don’t be afraid to say so. I will pay. Only draw it light for a little while, Viola, and, after I get round this corner in lard, I’ll see about the settled income.”

“I don’t believe a word about a corner in lard!” she said, viciously. “It’s only an excuse for your meanness. We might as well understand each other. I didn’t marry you for your beauty!”

“Heaven knows what you married me for,” he answered, wearily, “but

you've led me a hell's dance ever since."

Her reply was so coarse I do not care to set it down, and she seemed to consider it a climax, for she dashed into the room on the other side, and banged the door.

John stood irresolute; he took up his hat as if he meant to escape from her company, and then laid it down, and drew a chair to the table. He opened a letter-case he always carried in an inside pocket, and drew from it a long, narrow paper, which he spread out, and then began comparing its items with the contents of the jewel-cases in the bandbox.

I saw the day of wrath approaching with every mark of John's pencil, as he compared his wife's jewels with his former list in order to reinsure them for their home journey. He was an exact man, and performed the smallest business transaction with method.

I was lifting a tray in the last trunk when John's voice shouted "Viola!" so deafeningly that I turned round to see the dénouement that I knew was awaiting me. There was the puzzled look in his stupid, kind face, there was the empty case of the stolen emeralds, and, in a second, there was Madame de Thompkins, who rushed in, alarmed at the violence of her husband's shouts.

"What has become of your emeralds?" he demanded, holding out the velvet case.

She fairly tottered across the room, and held to the back of his chair for support. The advantage of her position was that he could not see her face.

"They were there an hour ago," she said, "when I unlocked the drawer for the packer."

"What packer? What do you mean?" asked John.

"There is a woman here packing my clothes; she is the only person who has had access to my jewelry," said Madame de Thompkins.

Her voice shook as she told this cruel lie, but John could not have been surprised at her agitation, for he was terribly excited himself.

I walked almost to the open door

and, catching her eye, looked her full in the face. Her eyes fell, but we did not speak. John had turned in his chair so that his back was toward me and his face was raised toward Madame de Thompkins.

"Of course she's got 'em!" he exclaimed. "Is she here now? I'll get the detective and have this thing straightened out. You oughtn't to let strange women loose among your things, Viola. Why in thunder can't you pack for yourself?"

"Oh, John, I'm so tired," she complained, and burst into tears.

"Cheer up, old girl," John said, patting her. He never could stand tears. "We'll get 'em back. You keep the young woman busy till I ring up the detective. By the way, where is she?"

I stepped through the door, and laid my hand on his shoulder.

"Here, John," I said, with a friendly smile.

"You!" he cried, stiffening with the shock. "What does this mean, Margaret?"

"Do you think I stole her emeralds, John?" I asked, making no attempt to explain.

"By George, no! I'd take my dying oath on that! Why, Viola, you've made an awful mistake; this lady isn't a packer! She's—she's—ahem!" he finished, rather feebly.

"She's a thief, whatever else you're choking over!" said Madame de Thompkins, violently.

"I am John Thompkins's former wife—indeed, the only one he has ever had, *Mrs. Levy*," I answered, looking at her with anger.

John had sprung from his chair, and she sank into it, a heap of abject terror.

"That woman isn't your wife," I went on, addressing John. "Her husband is living, and she has just given him the emeralds to buy his silence. I overheard the whole transaction. Shall I give it to you in detail?"

"I shall not stay here to be insulted by this creature!" cried Madame de Thompkins. "A pretty sort of coward you are, John Thompkins, not to raise a finger to protect me from her lies!"

She retreated into her sleeping-room, and locked the door.

John's face was a puzzle. He had grown white to the lips, and yet the fire in his eye spoke hope rather than despair.

"For God's sake, say it's true, Margaret!" he pleaded. "Don't make any mistake. He is welcome to the emeralds! He's welcome to the bandbox-ful! He's welcome to the whole lard business, if he'll take Viola along with it!"

He was trembling with excitement.

I made him sit down, and told my story as simply as I could, for only the plainest statement satisfied his craze for facts, and, when I had finished, he put his head on the table, and his shoulders heaved as if he were crying.

"Poor John!" I said, distressed at his emotion. "The whole thing has mortified you beyond endurance."

He raised his head, and steadied his trembling lips.

"It's happiness, Margaret!" he exclaimed. "You can't understand, because you don't know how a woman like that can break a man. I've got my share of sand, and I meant to stick it out and be good to her, too, but sometimes I've made plans to disappear, and I wouldn't be the first man, either! I didn't see any other way to part company with Viola."

"Why did you marry her?" I asked, for curiosity was very keen.

"I was lonely when you went away," he said, simply, "and the house got doleful. I missed having things orderly. But you made me feel such a common beast, that I never dared speak to women of your sort—I just took up with the people who took up with me, and Viola was kind to me at first. I thought she'd make me a good wife, and wouldn't despise me."

"Did you get divorced in order to marry her, John?"

He got very red, and nodded.

"I knew you'd never come back," he explained.

"Independence is sweet," I answered, "even if found in other people's

trunks. I think we were both intended for single harness, John."

"I know I ain't fit to run in double with a thoroughbred," he said, sadly.

"Good-bye," I said, and held out my hand.

"Don't leave me with Viola," he begged. "Just stop a minute."

He knocked at the door, but received no answer, and, after a pause, he went into the passageway and found the outside door leading to her room unlocked. The whole apartment was deserted save by our two selves.

As we stared at each other in amazement, a hall-boy brought John a note scrawled in pencil. It was from Viola, accusing him of all the crimes and meannesses she could think of, declaring she had to leave him after his treatment of her, but that she meant to bring the case before the courts to get alimony—and concluded by ordering her clothes and jewels sent after her to a hotel she named in Brooklyn.

"The impudent hussy!" I exclaimed, in a burst of righteous wrath. "I hope you will not give her a thing except her clothes."

"Why shouldn't I?" he answered. "She wants the things, and I don't. I'll settle something handsome on her, too, as soon as she admits she belongs to Isador Levy."

"John," I said, "you have a great big heart and the temper of an angel!"

"Seen in perspective, when I'm in Chicago and you in New York," he answered, with rather a bitter smile.

"You had better go back to Chicago, now, and enjoy your newly recovered freedom," I laughed. "Once more, good-bye."

I held out my hand.

"Good-bye, Margaret," he said, with a little break in his voice. "Would you mind my coming to see you sometimes when business brings me to New York?"

The request seemed to me an appeal, and I said "Yes," because I had a fancy that the real John Thomkins had the feelings of a gentleman, and I had only had the wit to make acquaintance with the outer man.

HER PHOTOGRAPH

By Reginald Wright Kauffman

*AND this was Jenny! This slim girl,
With merry face and truant curl,
With dancing, daring eyes that fence,
And air of roguish innocence,
Whose parted lips seem still to laugh
From out this faded photograph!*

Only five years ago, and she
Was one and part of us, and we
No better than we ought to be—
Tom, Dick and Harry.
Of one of us the less that's said
The better; Harry's safely dead,
And Dick, his wild oats harvested,
Intends to marry.

Far in some convent's cloistered close
There languishes our tall red Rose,
And Belle is gone—where, no man knows
Nor cares a penny.
To-morrow changed to yesterday;
We lost each other, I and they—
To-night, a turning of the way,
And there was Jenny!

Yet not the same. . . . The play was flat,
And I could gaze serenely at
The curtained box wherein she sat,
Begemmed, brocaded. . . .
("Oh, that's her husband at her side,"
My neighbor casually replied.) . . .
She yawned. I wonder if she sighed.
I'm sure she's faded.

And so, the girl I used to know
About Dick's poor old studio
Now's "the rich Mrs. So-and-So"—
The thing's astounding!
But stranger things have fallen out,
And that was Jenny, past a doubt,
Whatever chance has brought about
This pass confounding.

So only Jenny, of all three,
 Succeeded! Does her memory
 E'er turn to all that used to be?
 In faith, I doubt it!
 And who is happiest—poor Belle,
 Poor Jenny, or poor Rose? Ah, well!
 The answer none of us can tell—
 We're best without it.

*So that was Jenny! That tall dame
 Who bore a rich man's sordid name
 And purse; that woman, weary-eyed,
 Satisfied, yet unsatisfied!
 How can her young lips seem to laugh
 From out this faded photograph?*



SOMEWHAT SURPRISING

"JOHN," remarked Mrs. Bifkins, coldly, at the breakfast-table, "you were saying some rather queer things in your sleep last night. You mentioned something about Kittie and a full house and a show-down and a few other things along that line. What were you talking about?"

Did Mr. Bifkins tell his wife that Kittie was the name of the woman who cleaned out the office and that he was probably dreaming about the full house down at the show the other night? The funny papers would have you believe that he did. But he did not.

"I was probably dreaming of the poker game I sat in that night," he replied without batting an eye. "I lost \$37.15 in that game, by the way, so I can't let you have that \$19.98 for that Spring hat for a couple of weeks."

Did Mrs. Bifkins scream and burst into tears and call him a brute and go right straight back to her mother? The comic writers and the joke-smiths would have you think she did. But she didn't.

"You must be a bum pokerist, John," she said, scornfully; "I don't believe you know a straight-up from a four-flush. I believe I could give you three kings and beat you to the jackpot myself. What did you think you were doing—digging post-holes or playing ping-pong?"



IT LOOKED THAT WAY

CHAPPIE—She passed me without speaking.

SHE—What was she thinking of?

"Nothing, so she afterward told me."

"Oh! then it was intentional."

AN EASTER CAROL

By Ernest Jarrold

THE divine afflatus fell on Barney McGrath one day, and he became an author in imagination. In six months, he had completed his first novel. He called it "An Easter Carol." Barney read his story to his sweetheart, Mary Ellen Slattery, the brewer's daughter, thinking he wanted her criticism, but really seeking approbation. Mary Ellen said the novel was the most beautiful she had ever heard. Sweethearts make poor critics. This was sweetest confirmation of Barney's own opinion, and he looked forward to a quick acceptance by a publisher. Already, in fancy, he saw his name placarded on the dead walls, and saw himself pointed out by admiring women.

It was Barney's intention when his literary ship came in to wed Mary Ellen, and the wedding bells in imagination sounded much sweeter in his ears than the chimes of Easter ringing from the belfry of St. Sebastian's.

But Mary Ellen's father, opulent and hard-hearted, did not share Barney's views about the probable sale of one hundred thousand copies of an Easter story.

"Mary Ellen," said he, "poethry is all very well as a raycreation. To lie in bed of a Sunda' mornin', whin ye ought to be at mass, and hear the chimes, is very pleasant, bekase it costs nothin'. But writin' about Easter carols for money is another matther intirely. If you're goin' to wait 'till your laddybuck earns tin thousand dollars, wid ink and paper and a bit of steel, you'll wait till your hair reaches the ground, and you come from a short-haired family."

"Yes, I know, papa," pleaded Mary Ellen, "but Barney's book is a work of art, full of dramatic situations. Why, the church catches on fire while the Easter wedding ceremony is being performed, and the bells fall from the belfry into the flames. And while the happy couple are on their wedding tour in Northern Russia, the wolves chase the sleigh in which the heroine and hero are riding, and the bride is only saved from a living grave—a living grave, papa—by the heroism of the bridegroom."

"Oh, I know, I know, Mary Ellen, all about it. 'See the pale martyr wid his shirt on fire,' and all that. But I can buy better books nor ever Barney McGrath will write on the push-car-rts at wan cint each. Let him start the fire wid the book and come into the brewery wid me. I'll give him \$5,000 a year. Books are luxuries, but beer is a necessity wid most min."

"He never would do that," replied Mary Ellen, with conviction. "He says his conscience would not permit him to sell beer, which ruins men's kidneys."

"Kidneys, indeed," roared old Slattery. "And what does tea and coffee do to your kidneys, I should like to know? I'm not goin' into a timperance argymint, my gur-rl, but a man of his kidney will never git into the Slattery family. Why didn't he say beer would ruin min's gall, and he makin' love to a brewer's daughter! Your weddin' trusso will be bought wid beer money, Mary Ellen. Easter carol, is it! Shure, a mule will sing a come-all-ye before he'll make anny money out o' that. Now, run away, gur-rl," he

continued, as Mary Ellen tousled his carroty hair with her white hand, "and don't be givin' me anny of your illigint blarney," for Mary Ellen had dimples and a most persuasive tongue.

But Mary Ellen was not discouraged by her father's attitude. In fact, his opposition only caused the fires of love to leap higher on the altar of affection; for she considered Barney to be a martyr persecuted for art's sake. Besides, in secret, she deprecated the fact that her father was a brewer. Brewing she considered to be an ignoble pursuit. She admired tenors and matinee idols and literary men, and so she encouraged Barney to send his book to the most prominent publishers in the city.

It was weary waiting for Barney, for the publishers had the manuscripts of two hundred equally commonplace and similarly ambitious authors to examine before they reached his. Every time the postman's whistle sounded, he had an attack of heart palpitation. At the expiration of two months his novel was returned to him, with a polite note saying that rejection did not imply lack of merit, but that Easter stories were a drug in the market.

The return of his novel somewhat dampened Barney's ideas about literature, and he began to regard the brewery industry with more toleration. Still, he bought a dollar's worth of stamps and sent his manuscript away again. Another wait of six weeks, and again the novel, like the cat, came back, the polished civility of rejection rendering it all the harder to bear.

In the course of eight months, the postman wore a path in the sidewalk carrying the novel back to its author. By this time, Barney's money and literary egotism had vanished, and the brewery loomed on his vision as a harbor of refuge rather than as a purveyor of disease and death.

When Barney's poor luck was conveyed to Slattery by his daughter, he grinned like a Cheshire cat.

"I thought so, Mary Ellen," he said, with a chuckle. "Now, did McGrath say anything agin the brewery lately?"

"Not a word," said Mary Ellen.

"Well, thin, seein' as he's actin' dacint now, I'll publish the book myself, wid pictures and gold edges, on the best o' paper, and Barney's picture on the first page, and a chime of Easter bells, and a sunburst on the cover like the spokes of a brewery-wagon, and I'll have it in the book-stores agin Easter mornin'. There, now, run along, run along," as Mary Ellen kissed the bald spot on the back of his head in a delirium of delight.

Easter Day broke redolent of Spring blossoms and eau-de-cologne. Barney took Mary Ellen to St. Sebastian's, but all through the service his thoughts strayed to the novel, and the *Gloria in Excelsis* sounded like the triumphal march of his literary success.

Barney lunched with Mary Ellen and her father at the conclusion of the services. Easter lilies nodded on the table, while the orchestra played "The Palms." When the coffee was reached an obsequious waiter laid beside Barney's plate a beautifully bound copy of "An Easter Carol." A blush of pride suffused his cheek as he opened the book and saw a picture of himself in an indolent literary attitude. His pulse quickened as he read the author's introduction in double-leaded old-style small pica.

"Read a chapter aloud, me bucko," said Slattery, "to see does it suit you."

The words fairly jumped from Barney's tongue as he read the sentences which were destined to bring him fame and fortune. He turned the first leaf and stopped. He looked up and saw a broad grin on Slattery's face. In the middle of a magnificent description of the wedding pageant these words met his gaze:

"The hat worn by the bride was a dream in color and ornamentation. It came from the well-known establishment of Mme Franciulli, the noted Italian milliner. The famous artist had expended all her skill upon this *chef d'œuvre* of her art. The Easter lilies upon the hat looked so natural that it seemed as if their odor could be discerned. Mme Franciulli invites the criticism of the public at her exquisitely furnished apartments, No. 4 Belvidere avenue."

"'Tis beautiful work, McGrath," said Slattery, ironically. "Here, give me the book till I read a few passages of fine ar-rt."

In a dazed fashion Barney handed the book to Slattery, who read:

"As the sleigh emerged from the forest, a howl from a famished wolf fell upon the ears of the bride. So pregnant with ferocity was it that the pallid woman drew the collar of her costly seal robe about her ears, shutting out the awful sound. Buried in its warmth and luxury, her thoughts were diverted from her danger to the palatial parlors of Monsieur Pelletier, whose cunning fingers had fashioned it from the raw material, had lined it with crimson silk, and had placed upon it the silver clasps which confined it about her slender body. And the work, she reflected, had been done at a price to defy competition. And there were still a few similar coats to be had at No. 6 Dongerfield Place,' etc.

"Ha, ha," roared Slattery, as Barney arose from his chair, white with anger, and evidently about to leave the room. But Mary Ellen's arms were around his neck in a jiffy, and, only too willing to remain a prisoner under the circumstances, Barney was forced to listen to Slattery, who, between cyclones of laughter, read from the concluding chapter of the book:

"The beer drunk at the anniversary of the wedding came from the palatial brewery

of Michael Slattery. It was of a pale golden color, and it rippled over the palate of the bride in a gentle cascade which filled her rounded throat with nectar, and quickened her pulses to a harmonious rhythm. And yet this nepenthe was delivered, bottled and in the wood, at a figure which would astound our readers with its cheapness. For samples, write to Michael Slattery, No. 24 Belgrade avenue."

"Will you kindly explain all this, Mr. Slattery?" said Barney to the convulsed Irishman.

"McGrath," said Slattery, waving his eye-glasses, "Mme Franciulli has ordered ten thousand copies of your book, Pelletier has taken fifteen thousand copies to circulate among his customers, and I have ordered twenty-five thousand copies to advertise my beer. You will get a royalty of fifteen per cent. on the lot to-morrow if you don't kick over the traces on account of what you call your ar-rt. I have a dozen more ads. scattered through the book, which are good for fifty thousand more. Now, do you want to be a lit'ry man and starve, or a brewer's son-in-law wid money in the bank, and Mary Ellen?"

Barney's lips refused to reply, but the kiss he gave Mary Ellen was eloquent of consent.



DIFFERENT

COBWIGGER—When your wife searched your pockets, did she find some letters that you had forgotten to post?

GAYBOY—No, some I'd forgotten to burn.



HIS MEANING NOT CLEAR

BIBBS—Is Withers happily married?

GIBBS—I'm in doubt. He says he hasn't felt the need of borrowing trouble since he forsook bachelorhood.

LOVE'S HOUR

THIS is love's hour, sweetheart—mine and yours!—
 This fleeting hour the dreamer's soul deems best,
 Of deepening dusk-time, when the sunset pours
 A warm cascade of color down the West,
 And tinkling strains of twilight troubadours
 Float from the poplar's crest!

This is love's hour, sweetheart—gracious gift!
 When, hand in hand, alone, 'tis ours to go
 Down purpling paths where white-lipped roses lift
 Their light-blown kisses in the starry glow,
 And o'er the sward the locust-blossoms drift
 As soundlessly as snow!

The clashings keen, the clamors that infest
 The noon-wrapped city and its clanging mart,
 Subdued to silence all, have sunk to rest;
 No sounds discordant from the marshes start;
 This is the hour the dreamer's soul deems best—
 This is love's hour, sweetheart!

HILTON R. GREER.



NOT SATISFACTORY

MRS. JAWWORKER—So you are going to leave me, Bridget; haven't I treated you like one of the family?

BRIDGET—Indade, ye have, mum, an' Oi've shtood it as long as Oi'm goin' to!



DISAPPOINTING

HE—When Algy married her, everybody thought that he had struck a snug berth.

SHE—Well?

"It turned out to be nothing better than a 'cozy corner.'"

THE RAINING OF INFLUENCE

By Nivade Chetam

SISTER ALBANIE—SIMONE VINEUIL—
TO MONSIEUR THE VICOMTE RAOUL
DE FROISSAY

THIS letter will find you, monsieur, not in the little apartment which a month ago you found empty, and which nightly since you have visited—ah, I know!—for news of your Simone. I am writing you now, Monsieur Raoul, not, as you suspect, from some other apartment, more gilded and more ornate than that which you provided me, but from my cell in the convent of the Sisters of St. Ursula, where I now make my novitiate, and where, as soon as prayer and solitude have rendered me fit, I shall take the final vows. Permission has been given me by the mother superior, monsieur, to write one letter of farewell to the dear world I leave behind me. And now I write—not to my godmother, as I said—but to you.

I write, my friend, to ask you to forgive me that I have thus deserted you, and to tell you that even now, though my heart is vowed to God, it still belongs to you. For alas! the more I pray for forgetfulness, the more I remember you, my dear.

Then why, still loving you, do I leave you, and vow never to look upon you again? Listen, monsieur, have patience with your Simone, and hear her out; it is the last time—the last!—that you will ever hear from her.

It is now a month ago since the afternoon when I went, according to my custom, to see my sister, Juliette, who lies in the hospital of St. Ursula. I found her feverish, sunken, coughing, but courageously gay. The doctor

had that morning dropped the disguise of hope which he had hitherto worn with her, and warned her that she had but three months to live. She told me of this—smiling. I almost fell fainting in my sobs—figure to yourself, she has been dear to me, this child—but she summoned me to myself.

“Be brave, dear Simone,” said she. “I assure you, it does not hurt when one is certain—quite certain—of it. And he told me of it so nicely, this dear doctor!”

So, shamed by the courage of this child, I choked back my tears and tried to be calm. And, still smiling, Juliette told me of the fair meadows of heaven which the priest had promised to her, of the gentle words of the sisters, and of the kind benevolence of the doctor, whom, assuredly, she adores.

“Hold! It is near his hour for visiting me,” said she. “Stay with me but a few moments longer, my Simone, and you shall see him. In truth, but he is an angel, this dear Dr. Marvost!”

So, having some curiosity to behold this man who had shown such goodness to my sister, and without doubt of what was to come to me, I remained with Juliette as she asked me. Do not be jealous, my friend! It was not the coming of this man that has changed my life. He was, indeed, when he came, a man of fine figure, sufficiently presentable, and with a kind, handsome face; but after the first glance I had no attention for him. For with him came a lady, tall, sad, beautiful as the day, with the stillness of heaven in her eyes.

The doctor paused beside my sister's

cot; the lady looked down upon her with a smile that was full of tender pity.

"And so she is very sick, this little one?" she asked.

The doctor shook his head. Juliette looked up with a little laugh.

"I have, at any rate, three months to live!" said she.

The lady stood silent, still looking at my sister. The doctor bent down over her bed.

"Madame makes a tour of the hospital this afternoon," said he. "She wishes to know—is there anything you would like?"

The lady waved her hand in an imperious gesture of dismissal.

"You may leave me here, monsieur," said she, "I shall remain and talk with this young girl."

The doctor bowed and moved away; and the lady sank down on her knees beside my sister's little white bed. Ah, with what eyes did she regard the dying one! Two tears, like those which one sees in the images of the Mother of Grief, hung upon her lashes.

"My poor child," she murmured. "My poor child."

I turned away my head. Before that perfect purity, I felt myself too vile a thing to raise my eyes from the dust. And, as the voice went on, speaking to my sister in soft, far-away tones—like those one hears from the altar on Sunday—uttering sweet words of consolation, telling of the glorious home which was waiting for her—then, monsieur, as I listened, I shivered. I remembered the words of endearment to which I was accustomed; "Dear little Simone—*Houp-la*, Simone!—Hold, she has a pretty ankle, that little Simone!"

There was a brief silence, then the lady spoke again.

"The world is beautiful, dear," said she. "It is sad to leave it. And yet, it can be a cruel world, too—to us women! I, too—" and her voice broke into silence.

Juliette roused herself in astonishment.

"You, madame!" she cried. "You then have sorrows, too?"

The lady looked at her. "Ah, dear child—" said she.

For a moment she knelt with the face hidden, while Juliette softly touched her floating veil. When the beautiful eyes looked up again, it was with a question that they were bent on Juliette.

"And are you ready, my dear—you are absolved, you have confessed your sins?"

"Every week, madame," replied the feeble, vibrant tones of the little Julie, and I looked up, stung suddenly with the difference between me and the young girl who lay there so tranquilly in her narrow, white death-bed.

"Her sins!" I cried. "She has none, madame! She has none!"

"How can you say that, my sister?" feebly protested the little Juliette, and the lady touched the hollow eyes with a caressing hand.

"Those eyes," said she, "speak the truth, and they tell of the innocence of the dove. My dear, it is hard to die so young. And yet—God is good!—and He is taking you unspotted to Himself."

A sudden fierce joy burned in my heart. Such as my little sister was, I once had been. And if I had died then, at her age, before—before the world had opened for me, would it not have been better a thousand times? God was good; He was taking my little Julie, pure as a lily, to Himself. I exulted in the thought of her escape. But I knew myself, left behind—stained—stained!

The doctor stood again beside the bed.

"The carriage of madame waits below," said he.

As the lady rose to her feet, her hand lingered in that of Juliette.

"Come again, madame!" cried the child, adoringly.

"I will come often—often," promised the lady, bending over her with a kiss. "And here, dear little one, here is something by which to remember your friend." And she took the great

bunch of violets, sweet as May, which she wore upon her bosom, and laid them with a smile upon the pillow beside the flushed face of Juliette.

"*Au revoir!*" said she, and was gone.

I sat silent, not daring to breathe. Juliette buried her face among the violets.

"She is my saint," she whispered in a hushed voice. "I shall say my prayers to her to-night."

When I rose to go, one of the sisters came to speak with me. "She took a fancy to the little one, did she not, madame the vicomtesse?" said she.

"The vicomtesse?" I asked.

"She who was here just now, Madame the Vicomtesse Raoul de Froissay. She comes often of late. An angel, is she not?"

I turned, I could bear no more. This then was your wife, monsieur, this vision of purity and kindness, this angel of mercy! Her eyes were sad, she had spoken of her grief. Ah, I knew now the secret of her sadness! Beside her, how black a thing was I! Yet it was I who had robbed her of what should be all her own.

I hated myself, I writhed in a sudden realization of my unspeakable shame. I turned from the door of the hospital to go home—home to the little apartment which your bounty had furnished for me, and where, my beloved! we had spent so many hours of happiness together. I thought of you—of you, waiting for me. I thought of her—of her, waiting for you. I thought of the words of consolation and mercy which she had spoken to my sister—of her eyes, where the tears of pity gathered and fell—and then, since in our most sincere impulses there is mingled a grain of selfishness, I thought of my little sister, going forward smiling into the bright gates of heaven. And I thought of the mercy that was given to Saint Mary Magdalene—which perhaps might be in store for me. Yet do not think, my well-loved, that through cowardice I sought to buy salvation with a little cheap repentance, or, least of all, think that my love for you has failed! I love you so dearly—

so dearly! It hurts me—oh, it hurts me so to give you up! But I leave you forever—myself I give to heaven; you I give back to her whom heaven gave to you.

I turned back to the convent, I went to the mother superior, and asked her to receive me as a penitent, and, when I was worthy, to admit me into the strictest order of the Sisters of St. Ursula. Gladly, tenderly, were the arms of Mother Church opened to receive me. So, now, behold me, my friend, in the thirtieth day of my novitiate. The gates of the world have closed forever behind me, and in a year I take the black veil.

Adieu, dear Raoul. Do not be angry with me. For my sake, go sometimes to see the little Juliette, whom I never more may see. For her own sake, be faithful to your wife. Pray for me. Good-bye, dear.

Your
SIMONE.

You may write me once in farewell—one letter I am permitted to receive. But remember you are writing not to Simone—but to Sister Albanie.

II

THE VICOMTE RAOUL DE FROISSAY TO SISTER ALBANIE

If I write, as you bid me, not to my Simone, but to a sister of the Ursulans—what can I say? I loved her well, Simone! And, for the sake of the love I bore her, I pray you, sister, to hear me! Tell her whom I love, that I still live—I have lost her, but I still live. Tell her I have obeyed her commands, and have returned to my wife, that frozen and forgiving saint—alas, she has had enough opportunity to practise it, the virtue of forgiveness! Tell her I will go daily, as she asks me, to visit her little sister, and we will talk together of her whom we have lost. Tell her, to no one else but to Holy Church would I have resigned her. It rends my heart to lose her—but it is

not for me, whose name has been for centuries a prop of the Church, to oppose her holy will.

My wife awaits me. She deserves all that I can give her, I go to her—but, oh, sister, I beg of you, do not be too severe upon her, my little Simone! Not too many fastings, not too many vigils, not too many macerations of the flesh. Good-bye, sister, may heaven bless you. . . .

Oh, Simone, why did you do it! . . . Why did you do it, my little Simone!

R.

III

MADAME THE VICOMTESSE RAOUL DE
FROISSAY TO MONSIEUR THE
DOCTOR MARVOST

You reproach me, my dear friend, that I missed the rendezvous; and you demand when and where we can meet again. *Mon Dieu!* I reply, I know not!

Figure to yourself, my beloved! This husband of mine has turned like the weathercock he is, from what wind I know not—and *psst!* he plays the most devoted once more! Morning, noon and night he follows upon my

footsteps. It is with difficulty, indeed, that I snatch this moment in which to write to you. And, what makes the persecution very hard to bear, is that it is not through jealousy—I assure you, he suspects nothing!—no, it is simply the love of the picturesque that runs in the veins of all the Froissays. *Poseurs*, every one! But it has remained for Raoul, the last of his name, to conceive and develop this rôle, at once so original and so distinguished, of the devoted husband!

But perhaps, to-morrow afternoon—ah, *mon Dieu*, but this is hard to bear! He has just come to announce to me—take courage, my friend—that his heart yearns suddenly to the sick and dying; that, in short, he will hereafter accompany me upon my visits to the hospital of St. Ursula!

Then, upon my soul, he can go alone! For if I go not to the hospital to meet you, my friend, for what reason should I go at all? Ah, that quaint, dusky cabinet of yours, the soft cushions and the strange, faint smell of the drugs!—when shall I see it again?

Good-bye, my cherished one! I dare not write *au revoir!* . . . Oh, a pest upon this marital devotion! A thousand good kisses from your

Suz.



DECIDEDLY SO

FREDDIE—What does a green old age mean, dad?

CAXTON—When a man over seventy gets married again.



THE KIND HE HAD

SHE—Have you many warm friends?

HE—I have a large number of warmed-over ones!

IN HONOR OF ST. JULIAN

By Maurice Francis Egan

A householder and that a great was he;
St. Julian he was in his countree.

—CHAUCER.

THERE are many things to be said against Catherine de' Medici—among these the more cultured of the ignorant put the bringing up of Mary Queen of Scots—but there is one thing that may be safely stated in her favor: she introduced ices into France. Brillat-Savarin says so, in a most trustworthy book, *La Physiologie du Goût*, the title of which has unjustly been translated as "The Physiology of the Gout." I once knew a delightful old clergyman who had lived among criminals, as their prison chaplain, all his long life. He had a benevolent tolerance for them which was admirable. "Is that dreadful Jenny Lopez who killed her father-in-law with you?" somebody asked. "Ah, poor Jenny!" he answered, "her father-in-law was so exasperating, and she has *such* good intentions!" In spite of the position which Catherine de' Medici occupies in the polemics of the philosophical historians, we must tolerantly admit that she imported ices into France, from whence they went to England, and then they came to us. Who shall say that Catherine was not a woman of taste in gastronomical arts? History, when it really becomes a science, will not make philology its basis, but gastronomy, for gastronomy has had enormous influence on the course of nations. We all know that. Take the case of Napoleon. It is on record that Josephine had a most intelligent interest in the cookery suitable for the delicate digestion of a conqueror. We are all aware of what happened when Marie

Louise came in with her heavy Teutonic taste—we have it on the authority of Rostand that the unhappy Duc de Reichstadt was brought up on bonbons. And we know the consequence.

So far, notwithstanding the great activity of life in our country, little has been done to treat the subject of eating and drinking with that serious attention it deserves; and, the worst of it is, all our traditions are bad traditions. Locally, we are in a most unhappy position. Leaving out Louisiana, with its delectable city of New Orleans—where the delicate gumbo flourishes, and where the uses of the ham-bone are artistically considered—various localities sit in exterior darkness. When the Waldorf-Astoria was erected by an eminent sociologist with the view of making the masses exclusive, it was thought that a brilliant example of a *cuisine* in which simplicity and elegance combined might be held before the whole country, and that a people whose composite idea of luxurious food is a half-dozen "ears" of green corn, boiled in salted water and then drenched in salted butter, would easily accept an ideal of simplicity, while gradually becoming aware that it is the basis of elegance. But as a missionary work the Waldorf-Astoria seems to have failed, though in other respects it has succeeded.

In 1840, the minister of France in the United States was the Chevalier de Bacourt, a cross-grained and rather fastidious bachelor. He was related to both Talleyrand and Mirabeau. I do not, however, mention this in order to injure his character—and, by way of reparation, I may add that, if he had

lived to the present time, he would be related to that very sprightly lady who adds to the gaiety of France under the name of "Gyp." The Chevalier de Bacourt found fault continually with our lack of simplicity, though when the populace surged into the White House occasionally, and demanded its dinner on the threat of not voting for Martin Van Buren, he thought that, in this one instance, simplicity had become worse than simpleness. M. de Bacourt found—and this in June, 1840—the best dinner in New York's best restaurant "detestable" and "dear." He complains that, at the fashionable houses, the dinners were seasoned with an intolerable quantity of pepper; but, as, with the exception of the polished and aged Mr. Duer, he says that all "aristocratic" Americans were merely second- or third-class Englishmen, an English dinner was rather in keeping. As to the table decorations, they were merely ornamental, and M. de Bacourt could not find relief in them from the profusion of strange vegetables whose scents "poison" him.

Only forty years before, another minister—and a much cleverer one, Gouverneur Morris—had taken a sane view of the effect of gastronomical appointments on public taste in a new country. Morris was very much in society in Paris, and, when Washington, then President, wanted a *surtout* for his dinner-table, he naturally confided the commission to the elegant minister who habitually consorted with the nobility of the old régime. Morris fulfilled the commission, and writes thus of the *surtout*:

In all there are three groups, two vases and twelve figures. The vases may be used as they are, or when occasion serves, their tops may be laid aside and the vases filled with natural flowers. When the whole *surtout* is to be used for larger companies, the large group will be in the middle, the two smaller ones at the two ends, the vases in the spaces between the three, and the figures distributed along the edge, or, rather, along the sides.

Mr. Morris explains that the *surtout* is of *biscuit*; he adds:

I could have sent you a number of pretty trifles for very little prime cost, but you must have had an annual supply, and your table should have been in the style of a *petite maîtresse* of this city.

. . . I think it very important to fix the taste of our country properly; and I think your example will go very far in that respect. It is therefore my wish that everything about you should be substantially good and majestically plain; made to endure.

The *surtout*, one may be sure, was in much better taste than the great structures of pastry and confectionery, representing castles, bridges and arches, in vogue at this time in the dining-rooms visited by Horace Walpole. The formerly inevitable epergne—a survival of the Georgian era—went out long ago; but occasionally a hostess of our day revives the memory of the *surtout* by dotting her table with meaningless little animals and shepherdesses and Cupids in bisque, or by stationary swans on a centre-piece of glass.

The taste which was to be good and majestically plain—that is, simple—and to be formed by the first President, has not come down to us as a nation. And when a very witty successor of M. de Bacourt said that there were two kinds of architecture in New York, the "beaux arts" and the "bizarre," he might have applied it to our cookery and table decorations. The horrors that infested nearly every American home in the way of haircloth sofas and chairs for the "parlor," and the curious cruets called "casters" for the table, are no more; but the various women's journals, showing how turnips carefully chiseled may serve for mushrooms, and how red flannel, parboiled, makes a very presentable stuffing for olives, are all banded against that simplicity which makes the table of the well-to-do Norman farmer dignified and even elegantly plain. Mock elegance, the elegance of the Parisian *petite maîtresse*, has become a tyrant. And, as mock elegance reigns, simplicity and comfort go out. The millionaire's manner of life, as described lovingly in the daily press, sets the pace. The wife of the man of three thousand dollars a year believes that

she is forced by her "social position" to spend as much on one luncheon as an honest *bourgeoise* of the same class would spend on a score, and yet the normal visitor received by the *bourgeoise*, Parisian or provincial, has much more satisfaction from his fish, fowl and salad than from the ten or twelve courses the American woman will offer him at immense expense of nerve force to her, and a great loss of time to him.

The modern foreigner visitor entertained so lavishly by persons who cannot afford to do it, and who do it with such evident difficulty, is not so frank as the ill-natured de Bacourt was when he was overwhelmed with "barbaric" vegetables and not one sauce in sight. In Mrs. Burton Harrison's "Anglomaniacs"—which is a classic in its way—there is an old countess who expected to find at luncheon a slice of mutton and perhaps a generous quantity of bitter beer; but she was shut in out of the air and sunlight in a room, lighted artificially, with a group of admirably dressed women to assist at the performance of a typical meal in a dozen courses. Mrs. Harrison's old countess's point of view represents that of scores of persons who visit our country, and who leave it, gratified but oppressed. An unfortunate Englishman of moderate means recently left our shores with a heart bowed down. "In New York," he confided to a friend, "I have, for a month, had no luncheon that did not cost at least two pounds and no dinner anywhere for less than five! What am I to do when my hosts and hostesses come to me? They will disdain soup, boiled fowl and a tart. I shall be despised," he "cried," as they do in the novels, "or made bankrupt!"

One of the first of the nobles of France has, after a visit to Newport, lately whispered that gold plate fit for kings was no amelioration for the pangs brought on by costly arrangements of the incompatible and the abuse of champagne, which in certain circles is known as "wine." In those circles there is no other wine. It is

not to the sense of economy which the advanced gastronomist should appeal, but to the desire of the prolongation of enjoyments which the late M. Brillat-Savarin and his later disciples so well understand. Now all the clients of St. Julian, who is the patron of the hospitable, ought to be solicitous for the comfort of their guests—and, more, that their guests should conserve their best powers of conversation; it is not a question of merely tickling the palates of the invited, as the vulgar rich seem to think—they who seem ignorant of gastronomic secrets which the poorest *curé* of Normandy or Provence knows—secrets at once psychological and physiological. And, therefore, all the clients of St. Julian should recall, when they are tempted to abuse champagne, with the best intentions, of course, a certain theorem—to speak it as a dogma might seem irreverent in these days of free-thinking—deduced by the great Brillat-Savarin.

He says, "The first effects (*ab initio*) of champagne are exciting; afterward (*in recessu*), they are stupefying." And the great Corvisart, one of the few real *gourmets* who survived that elegant society of which the exquisite Bishop of Autun was so important a figure, decided that champagne is only possible, to quote Brillat-Savarin's august words, "*frappé de glace*." This doctor, who liked champagne too well, began to drink it at once; and, in the beginning, he was charming; he was brilliant; he coruscated; he was superb. At the dessert, when everybody talked, he became silent, even morose. This was his one fault as a diner-out. In this only was he a *gourmand*; in all else, he was a *gourmet*. This must be said in justice to him. And, by the way, in accentuating the axiom which M. Brillat-Savarin had deduced from the practice of Dr. Corvisart, he regrets that the physician of his time neglected, in his remedies, the natural bent of the taste of the patient. There was the case of M. de Montlusin de Pont de Veyle. The doctor here was terribly cruel. M. de Montlusin de

Pont de Veyle was a person of unusually refined taste in wines. Never had he drunk a red wine that had not the warmth of the sun in it, and never a white, except the wine of Champagne, which was above the temperature of the cellar. The ferocious doctor, whose name is mercifully withheld, not only forbade wine to the invalid, but prescribed for him large doses of water. No sooner was the heartless physician gone than madame, anxious to share in the honor of curing her husband, offered him a large vase of beautiful and limpid water; he received it with docility, and tasted it. "Take it, my dear," he said, "and keep it for another time; I have always heard that one should never trifle with medicines."

This digression recalls the painful convention, known only in our beloved country, by which the guests are forced to sit through a dinner worthy of gluttons with no accompaniment but the crystal fluid with which M. de Montlusin de Pont de Veyle declined to jest.

Horace, who was a gentleman, knowing what a good dinner meant, is all for the simple. The Falernian, yes, and the ancestral plate, with a salad, if you will, of mallows, olives, and endives, but no sculptured cups, worthy of the pontiffs and the vestal virgins.

*Me pascunt olivæ,
Me cichorea, levesque malvæ.*

And the test of gentleness the world over is the perfection of its simplicity—I should say of correct simplicity. Both the Duc de Lauzun and the Duc d'Orléans, Philippe Egalité, ordered, just before they were introduced to Madame Guillotine, repasts fitting the occasion. They had both lost their principles long ago; good taste, however, remained. If I remember the record, they did not mar the occasion with over-luxury; they ordered oysters and a white wine. The only fact set down to the credit of de Lauzun—it will be remembered that he died Duc de Biron—was that he interceded for his wife with the butchers of the Revolution; and to the credit of Egalité,

that he refused, on the way to execution to agree to the marriage of his daughter, Adelaide, to Robespierre. But, as the latter extenuating circumstance has been proved false, the circumstance that he did not order a red wine with the oysters ought to be recalled, and count for what it may. The pernicious habit adopted by some hosts of forcing sweet cocktails with cherries immediately before the oysters would have made both de Biron and Egalité blush—a phenomenon so unusual that it deserves mention. Whiskey and oysters are really as incompatible as oysters and sugar—but until reformers, like Mrs. Nation, turn their zeal in a sane direction, the true value of the little ironies of chemistry will never be understood by our people.

There are hosts who insist on consulting their own tastes without regard to those of their guests or the combinations which the perfected taste of the world, as settled in France, dictates. It is true there are certain dishes which France cannot claim, and, being ignorant of which, she disdains. This is unfortunate. Brillat-Savarin, who might have saved France from its scorn of cranberry-sauce with turkey, had the good luck to eat a wild turkey, during his exile, in the house of a Connecticut farmer. He does not mention pumpkin-pie, which, alas! the French know not—but he says that there was a chaste evening meal of corned-beef, stewed goose, a leg of mutton, with plenty of "roots" of all kinds, and at each end of the table two large pots of excellent cider. After this came tea. This was in October, 1794. Some days were spent in shooting. Squirrels and a wild turkey-cock were brought down. On the way back, "I," says M. Brillat-Savarin, "was lost in profound reflection; I thought," he adds, solemnly, "of how I should cook my turkey-cock." Nobody had the foresight to suggest cranberry-sauce. He bore the effort of the struggle alone. He trembled for fear that he might not be able to get from Hartford the necessary accompaniments. He admits that he suffered great

anxiety, for he had invited American guests, and he was devoted to St. Julian; besides, his reputation was at stake. And yet nobody dared, so great was the prestige of this Frenchman, to suggest the unique cranberry! He does not give details—"It is enough to say that the wings of the partridges were served '*en papillote*,' and that the gray squirrels simmered in Madeira." He declines to name the details of the preparation of the turkey, which was the only roast at this dinner. "It was charming to the sight, delightful in its odor, and delicious to the taste." Did he use chestnuts, for the Lyons sausage was out of reach? Or onions? Or sage? We shall never know; the secret is lost with that of the man in the iron mask. If—but we can only regret that his approval was not given, for the sake of his nation, to the cranberry-sauce.

The modern *menu à la Amérique du Nord* shudders at pork, because pork cannot be crowded into a little silver or paper box with foolish frills about it. When men learn to eat roast pork without the "crackles," one may believe anything evil of the future; but, when pork is eaten without the sub-acid apple-sauce, predictions of evil are accomplished facts. What to drink with pork has always been a grave question. Neither Brillat-Savarin nor any other director of taste has ever satisfactorily answered it. As to the turkey, that is very different—you would do well to consider whether the turkey has been walnut-fed, after the manner of Florence, chestnut-fed after the manner of France, or the *dindon à la Bordelaise* by which the late Mr. Ward McAllister is best remembered. Brillat-Savarin is silent on the subject of the very young turkey; he would probably have recommended a sound Bordeaux with all turkeys. The turkey *à la Toulouse* or *à la Bordelaise* is plucked from the parent stem in July, and Mr. Ward McAllister played him—to make a mixed metaphor—to the accompaniment either of a white or dark sauce. Justice Greedy, in "A

New Way to Pay Old Debts," is in despair because the cook threatens to serve woodcock without buttered toast, and he rejoices when he hears that the venison is to be done in puff paste. The Elizabethan menu is somewhat heavy, but no more heavy than that of the Victorian epoch as represented by Dickens, whose characters are consoled in almost all situations by tripe and onions or beefsteak with tomato sauce; and this heaviness still clings to the English kitchen, which produces a thin or a thick soup, a joint and a tart, year after year. It is simple enough, but so inelegant that a good cup of coffee was never made in England, and the ices are things of amazement. It is better, being honest, than the *carte du jour* or *du soir* with which we Americans celebrate. The hideous custom, lately come into vogue, of the hostess helping herself first is the result of an artificiality which is spoiling our national manners.

Either the hostess fears, knowing her cook, that the guests may be poisoned, and heroically offers herself as the first victim, or she feels obliged to teach them by example the uses of the various instruments lately introduced to perplex the innocent and please the ostentatious. There is the new kind of oyster-fork, with an apparatus attached which enables the barbarous to cut a too large oyster. There is the new fish-knife, with a repository for the bones in the handle, which is of gold and platinum. There is the entrée-spoon and fork combined, especially adapted to lobster *à la Newburgh*. There are the new imitation-Sheffield affairs, which resemble complicated thimbles. You fit them to your right forefinger and thumb, and you are thus enabled to hold the leg of a quail or squab with safety and "style." There are the combined fork and scissors—shown in the jewelers' windows in Renaissance designs—for mangling lettuce—these are sometimes used—and this is almost too horrible!—for cutting spaghetti into the lengths required by the Goths of our time. There is, too, the orange-cup,

with a little spring in it which grips the golden fruit as in a vise. The hostess shows you how to touch the spring!

All this reminds me of the answer of a young friend of mine to a person who asked if he still kept a samovar—"I did," he said, "until the engineer struck." The hostess of to-day, who wants to keep in the current of table "improvements" must be something of a mechanic; but even such skill, laboriously acquired and exhibited by the aid of electric lights, changing in color with each course, does not compensate for the loss of that simplicity which permitted a dinner to be merely a perfect background for conversation. There are still charming Creole ladies who cherish a ham-bone for gumbo more dearly than all the glittering array of silver and gold instruments that dazzle and affright the ingenuous guest who is not ingenious.

"This, general," an amiable hostess is said to have remarked to General Sheridan, who had taken up an ordinary fork at the beginning of a dinner, "*this* is the oyster-fork." "Damn it, madam," the general, it is alleged, answered, "I know it!" It is needless to say that this story cannot be true, since the general never used the word "damn" in the presence of ladies; and the addition which makes the general say, "I'll use my sword, if I please," is banal to the last degree; the first is "*ben trovato*;" the second, not "well invented." At any rate, a glance, which is generally one of dismay and fear, at the very elaborate modern table setting would have justified the brave general in any language he could have used.

Chaucer tells us that the tables were always being spread in the house of his famous client of St. Julian; but we know, from other passages in the Prologue to the "Canterbury Tales," that even the simple fork was absent from these feasts. One cannot conscientiously recommend a return to the simplicity of a time when a good wash in a big basin was necessary to remove the remains of a dinner from

the guest. In King James's time this process was made agreeable, as Massinger, in "A New Way to Pay Old Debts," informs us, by the dropping of precious powders into these pleasant vats.

When is the present ostentation to end? Even in Washington, where the poor but elegant Army and Navy and the careful legations might have been expected to uphold the tradition of elegant simplicity, the service of gold, the strange entrées and the terrible compounds of unknown scraps, accompanied by orchids and electric lights and wonderful mechanical devices, are making the rites of hospitality impossible to the real *gourmet*.

How few there are like the charming lady in one of Brillat-Savarin's anecdotes!—how few there are who know what a good dinner is! But she did, although she had been brought up in an artificial school. She had called on a simple *curé*, to offer alms for his poor, and she did not know that *curés* dine in the middle of the day. Dinner had just been announced, and the *curé* asked her to dine with him. She consented; it was a new era in her life; after that, culinary complications became vulgar in her eyes, *pâté de foie gras* and cream-laden sauces disgusted her, and even Nesselrode pudding, unless made by an artist, made her unhappy. As for liqueurs, she learned to regard a liking for them as a symptom of advancing age. It was a fast day, and this made perfection all the more difficult to attain on the part of the *curé's* old servant, Juliette. The table-cloth glistened, the porcelain was exquisitely white, a decanter of good wine gave color to the board, the plates were kept hot over boiling water. The soup was a bisque of crabs, followed by a salmon-trout, with a sauce admirably proportioned, and then came an omelet of fish-roe, so round, so odorless, so redolent of parsley and chives, that for a moment all conversation stopped. A salad, on the leaves of which light dew-like drops quivered, preceded the dessert of three luscious pears, a cheese resembling Camembert,

and a pot of conserves. The *cure* did not say grace until he and his guest had sipped from fragile, but not costly, cups, the limpid and hot Mocha. "No liqueurs!" the *cure* said. "For my friends, yes! But no strong drinks for me, they are the resources of age!"

It is recorded that the lady was affected almost to tears by this combination of simplicity and elegance. It was a revelation; and, to this appreciative marquise, the introduction of the famous *omelette au thon*—the secret of which was almost lost in the Revolution—into Parisian society is due.

When will our leaders of fashion learn the lesson taught by this great

lady of the old world? When will they know that only the jaded palate craves much that is eaten in gilded dining-rooms to-day, and that gold plate and the eternal champagne will not make amends for mosaic salads or—and it fills the sensitive soul with horror to mention it—spaghetti cooked in the American way?

The fruit-pie as a national dish will always remain. Trusts cannot kill it, or the failure of the peach crop wither it; but, while we admit this, can we not mitigate the national reproach by teaching ourselves that

"Good talk is more than dry champagne,
And simple food than truffled ham?"



A BIRTHDAY WISH TO BABETTE

THE Summers come, the Winters go
With their apportioned weal and woe,
And there be those who grieve 'tis so;
But *I* demur at this *propos*,
And dare to wish long seasons yet
For Life to dance his minuet
With you, Babette!

May he move lightly tippie-toe,
And choose the step that best you know.
In sooth, Life is a gallant beau!
And may you smile and tell him so,
When he shall bow with soft regret,
And make his final pirouette
To you, Babette!

ELISABETH R. FINLEY.



NOT ENOUGH

ALICE—I am throwing my love away on Jack.

GRACE—Surely not. He seems as devoted as ever.

"You fail to comprehend my meaning. I've just learned that he gets only ten thousand dollars a year."

THE HILL-SIGHT

*OF love there be two hills:
 Who has seen them, at eve or dawn,
 Wanders forevermore
 Where the wind has gone.*

I

There is one hill of quiet green,
 Girt by a little ring
 Of tremulous apple-trees, all white
 In the sweet air of Spring;
 And no winds stir the gentle peace
 Of their tender blossoming.

And there two slender lovers walk
 Dreamily, hand to hand.
 His face is lit as with a joy
 Too new to understand;
 Her eyes, with some great wonder dimmed,
 Dream in a far-off land.

II

There is a lonely hill of pines,
 Half-dim with purple haze,
 Behind which sets the dying red
 And gold of Autumn days.
 And few come unto it, or know
 Its labyrinthine ways.

And there stand two with unclasped hands:
 He holds a broken lyre;
 Her gaze is past the empty plain,
 Out in the flume of fire
 Where day sinks into the waiting night
 With its dreams and its vain desire.

*Of love there be two hills:
 Who has seen them, at eve or dawn,
 Wanders forevermore
 Where the wind has gone.*

ARTHUR DAVISON FICKE.



A RACE-TRACK quotation: "Of the making of books there is no end."

OUR BABY DEPARTMENT

UNDER THIS HEADING, ALL COMPLAINTS FROM BABIES WILL RECEIVE
CONSIDERATION

UPPER FIFTH AVENUE.

DEAR EDITOR:

About four months ago I was born into a family of wealth and social position, and since that unhappy hour I have led a life of misery and neglect. I have seen my mother but once, as she was going to a reception, and then she cut me dead. Imagine my feelings on that sad occasion! I haven't had a particle of nourishing food, and of the two nurses who have charge of me, I don't know which is worse than the other. What would you advise?

VANDYKE K.

Patience! The time will come when you can get even. By-and-bye, when your parents are beginning to let you in on the family games, and ask your opinions about politics, you can sit around and smoke cigarettes, and be seen with soubrettes. As long as they are giving you the icy stare at present, you can get on their nerves by-and-bye. Patience, then, and courage.

DEAR EDITOR:

In spite of the fact that I am the first baby, I have managed to worry along for a couple of years in this family, and live to tell the tale. Being naturally resourceful, I have found quite a little to interest and amuse me, having investigated the inside workings of a clock, discovered the chemical action of red ink on a lace gown, found out that the noise in a drum is purely subjective, and made other interesting experiments. Now, however, I learn to my dismay that I am to be sent to a conventional kindergarten, just as I was getting ambitious to know something worth while.

WILLIE W.

Do not despair. Remember, Willie, that it is always possible to learn, even from a system of education. You can snatch a little knowledge even from the jaws of the kindergarten, and you must remember that youth is not so much a period of satisfying your ambition as of gaining control. By-and-bye, when you get to be about fifty and your school-days are over, you will begin to pick up a few elementary facts. At present, have as much fun as possible out of school.

DEAR MR. EDITOR:

I am a highly nervous and sensitive baby. My father and mother, I regret to say, have the jouncing habit. At times, things go wrong, which naturally makes me irritable; but no sooner do I display the slightest signs of this than the horrible jouncing begins, and my father, I regret to say, is not only a jouncer, but a dangler. That is to say, while, in some public conveyance, for instance, my mother is jouncing me up and down, my father dangles some

horrible thing in front of my eyes. Imagine my mortification! At present, I am almost a hopeless imbecile. What can I do?

CLARA J.

It is certainly too bad that your parents have turned out so badly. At present, no doubt, you never display any irritation unless there's something really important the matter with you. But, hereafter, yell all the time, whether or not there is anything the matter with you. It will be very hard at first, and you will have to go through the continuous jouncing performance, but if you can keep it up, you may, in time, attract the attention of the authorities, who will take your misguided parents in hand, and show them how you ought to be treated.



'TIS CANDLE TIME

'TIS candle time; the day has grayed
To dusk; the low tea-table's laid,
And Flo and Phyllis cozily
Discuss their world, and sip their tea
From curious cups of priceless jade.

'Tis now each calls a spade a spade,
For, if there is one hour made
For gossip most especially,
'Tis candle time!

"Mabella's gown's a horrid shade;
Whatever made her choose brocade?"
"Gwen's flirting just outrageously—
She'll soon win Jack from poor Marie!—"
Alas! I'm very much afraid
'Tis scandal time!

CAROLINE MISCHKA ROBERTS.



HOW THEY AGREED

MR. MARTIN was fond of pets, and was somewhat inclined to boast of the friendly feeling existing among his dogs, guinea-pigs, owls and fancy pigeons. One day a neighbor, who had reason to suspect that all was not going well on the Martin side of the fence, asked if the latest acquisition, a fine Angora cat, was living in harmony with the other animals.

"How," asked the neighbor, "do your young rabbits and your new cat agree?"

"Beautifully," replied Mr. Martin. "The cat eats the rabbits, and the rabbits agree with the cat."

"SOUNDING BRASS"

By Emery Pottle

THE train had but just left Utica, and, more than that, it was two hours late.

"It will be at least a decade before we reach New York," complained Miss Malden, opening, for the fifth reluctant time, her magazine, in the empty hope that something unforeseen therein might amuse her. She had inventoried her chilly, fretful fellow-travelers earlier in the afternoon; the sum of their personalities had sent her hastily to her reading again. She took to wondering how many beads had gone to the trivial decoration of the grim woman across the aisle; and even attempted to count the little hacking coughs of the frail lad ahead; presently, she wondered idly why the tall young chap, who had earlier secured the chair next hers, did not sit in it, and offer her a possible diversion, instead of smoking himself to death in the buffet-car, as she idly concluded he must be doing. She roused herself with a deprecating laugh at the nonsense her vagrant brain had seized upon.

The young man, whom she had carelessly reverted to, indeed at that moment, returned to his seat, and gazed about with the vague discomfort which assails a man of long, loosely-fitted limbs, in a Pullman. In an uneasy swing of his chair, his foot, by chance, touched Miss Malden's. His words of excuse, quick in coming, did not efface the deepened lines of her face which her earlier smile had brought. So encouraged indefinitely, her neighbor glanced at her with a certain deferential boldness, which elab-

orated instantly into surprise and gratified desire.

"I may be wrong, but surely not," he said in an eager tone which, nevertheless, carried an accent of deprecation and of the wish to conform to all proprieties. "Surely you are Miss Caroline Malden, the au—" he caught the trite word on his tongue and finished—"the lady who writes the novels and short stories every one talks about."

Miss Malden nodded tolerantly, waiting for him to continue; she wondered why he had swallowed "authoress"—the change of phrase interested her. He did not hesitate: "It was the profile that made me certain—I saw it—your picture—in *The Light*, last month." He smiled at his ability to enforce his contention.

"But that was taken in evening dress," she smiled back, parleying with him; "how could you—?"

"Oh, I knew," he returned, triumphantly, adding after an instant—"I am—my name is Peter Bridge."

"You have taken all the honors," Miss Malden answered, lightly, "of our acquaintance, introducing yourself and leaving me no opportunity to disclose, dramatically, my identity at the end of our journey. You go to New York? Good. I am terribly bored with this prosperous country, this prosperous magazine, and, in fact, my prosperous self, Mr. Bridge. Let us talk incessantly the rest of the way."

Miss Malden gave herself with more than her wonted freedom—partly from relief at the promised diversion, partly

from a desire to prove Bridge's stuff. The man responded with boyish enthusiasm—so boyish, in fact, that Miss Malden, for the moment, forgot to take accurate note of the marks on her companion which confessed, at the most, about thirty years.

Bridge dragged the talk laboriously to herself with such a persistence and so frank a curiosity that, at last, Miss Malden, with a brief prayer for mercy to the gods of the things that are, allowed him to have his way; and, indeed, she did not find wholly unpleasing his half awe and half envy of her secure position in the market-place of book-makers.

"Do you believe the things you write?" He put it, after an intent pause, so boldly that she started. "The things you make your people say, I mean?"

"Ultimately—as bits of knowledge—yes. I believe them in this way, perhaps: that I believe there are people in the world who believe those things. You understand that I—that any one who writes—must, too, put into some characters real personal beliefs hammered out of life."

She regarded him with a closer interest; he had a trick of eyes—a constant shifting of them, not so much, it appeared, from reluctance to meet hers, as from uncertainty of the proprieties of the occasion. The tangle of his black hair fell not ungracefully on his forehead; his extraordinarily good-looking face and expressive physique held possibilities, she recorded, of experience. Her eyes sought approvingly the deep cleft in his chin.

"Wait," he said, abruptly, and, thrusting out a long arm, he drew his bag to him. Miss Malden needed not the evidence of the well-known blue-cover to acquaint her with his design.

"Here," he went on, spreading a recent novel of hers on her knee, with an attitude of familiarity she did not resent. "You make Sarah say: 'My dear Blair, there's nothing in New York that counts save results—you can speak with the tongues of angels, yet without these oblations to the god

Success you're nothing but sounding brass.' Do you believe that?"

"Yes, I believe that—why not? No one wants you unless you bring him what he demands? Abel—wasn't it?—brought his god a burnt offering, the best of his flock, and Cain brought of the fruit of the ground. And unto Cain's offering the Lord had not respect," she replied with underlying seriousness.

"Yes, but Cain slew Abel," Bridge said, sharply.

Miss Malden laughed. "Ah! and he bore the murderer's mark on his forehead."

"I suppose you are right," he answered slowly, referring to the earlier moment of their talk. "It's hard for a man to stand on what he *is*."

"A man *is* what he achieves; there is no *is* back of the achievement—if you understand me?"

"Results—as you call them—are only a cloak," Bridge said, moodily.

"A cloak knit from the fiber of your mind and soul," she answered, largely.

"But a cloak."

"No, not a cloak! Results are yourself in precipitate."

For an instant, Miss Malden caught his eyes; their dark, nervous intensity held her, half startled; then he turned consciously, to stare out at the dreary succession of spinning farm-houses, expanding rushing into clotted towns, scattering again into the dullness of the solitary brown, Spring fields.

When he spoke again, it was with the return to his youthful ingenuousness—his smile, a droll twist of his sensitive lips, a quick show of his fine teeth, Miss Malden reflected, would win him much; and yet it seemed, unaccountably, to contradict the impression of power in reserve which his face—an habitually moody one—begot in her.

"Literary people are mighty interesting, aren't they?"

"Yes—to themselves, always," said Miss Malden, shrugging.

"They must be if they're all like you," he dared. The candid compliment, not to be denied by her, put him

into humor with himself. "But they must be, though. Wonderful! I—I've always wanted to know some one who wrote books, and now I know *you*." Miss Malden was amused at his calm progression. "I've never known but one other author," he continued, slowly.

With a scant desire for the implied experience, she put the question—"Tell me of that one."

But Bridge uneasily thrust her off. "He was a poor thing—I—I didn't know him well."

He went back. "There can't be any class of people whose results are so great as the writers'——"

"Or so inadequate," she put in.

He laughed, but at his coming words it appeared—"They are a sort of gods to me. I want to know the people who write. Is it hard? Could I?" he appealed.

"It depends on whether you want to talk or to listen," Miss Malden parried. She began to feel him too close to her gates.

Bridge disregarded the remark and said, haltingly: "I'm a Westerner—I've lived nearly all my life in a little town in Illinois, not a very literary habitat. And I've been poor—you don't mind my telling all this?—and have had to fight for all I got. But I've *wanted*—great God—I beg your pardon—*everything*. I've starved and thought and worked and slaved and—wondered. This is the first time I've ever been in New York. What I've got I've fought for," he repeated at the end.

"What have you got?" Miss Malden found herself asking against her will; suddenly she found herself resenting Bridge—for some indefinable lack of—to use a dull word—sincerity.

His eyes twinkled. "I'll tell you—some day." Then with abrupt change of manner, as on the heels of a resolve, he faced her: "Have you ever read a book called 'Hampden'?"

"I finished it only last week," said Miss Malden, suddenly alert; the book had swept her off her feet; it was the memory of it that had taken the edge

from her own work for days, and spoiled her enjoyment of other reading.

"Did you like it?" he pursued, eagerly.

"It is the best thing that has come out in years—it's an epic, a crude, elementary, rough-shod epic. It's big, enormously big, with material in it for three books. It left me breathless—with anger and admiration. It lacks so much that it makes up for so tumultuously; it's full of wretched bits of English—but, oh, the power and abandon of the thing! It made my own book look like writing in the sand." Miss Malden flushed with the vigor of the expression.

"This man," she continued, "this John Peters, who wrote it—the publishers tell me it is some assumed name—they know almost nothing of him. He lives in the West somewhere, and refuses to see any one, or speak of himself—remarkable in these days when we shout from the housetops what we have done and are about to do."

Bridge lay back in his chair, his lean, nervous hands clasping one knee, his eyes shifting, and his features set and unspeaking. His silence checked Miss Malden's words, though, in truth, she was not voicing them any more for him than for herself.

"And you have read it, too?" she said, presently.

"Yes."

"Perhaps it—" she began, doubtfully.

"Can you keep a secret?" he asked, at length, brusquely, to her annoyance. She made no reply, and he accepted the rebuff.

"The book is mine," he said, slowly. "I wrote 'Hampden.'"

"You?" Miss Malden felt a swift resentment, which she knew was childishly unfounded. With quick warmth she put out her hand, and grasped his.

"For your results," she said. "You have brought the firstlings of your flock." He bowed over her hand, flushing a deep, long-continuing red.

The lights of the city, gold sown broadcast in a field of purple, were stretching out in long level lines, in terraced banks, in clustering masses, friendly, inspiring lights, when they ceased talking of his book. Bridge gazed out at them shrinkingly, then with a rush of desire.

"They're great, aren't they?" he said, unreservedly.

"Yes, they're everything—'friend o' my nights, and the lights o' the town'—they're the world, and sometimes they're the life everlasting," Miss Malden murmured.

"You'll keep my secret?" Bridge said later, as they stood up in the bustle of arriving. "It's a caprice with me, my little incognito—I want to win without my cloak, you know."

She faced him, again vaguely repulsed.

"Yes—yes, I'll keep it. But—success to you," she finished hastily, and gave him a quick hand.

"May I come to see you?"

She gave him her card with a word of direction, wondering.

"Good night," he said, and walked hesitatingly away; then, with a sudden boyish return, he shook both her hands.

"You're my first real author," he laughed. "We're bound to be great friends."

In spite of all, he was convincing in this.

II

THE thin film of Spring lay over Washington square, green, tenuous, likely to yield, so it occurred to Caroline Malden, at any moment to the pressure of life beneath it, and to free the striving buds and leaves. Of late, she had awakened daily with a little breathless suspense, thinking to find the Spring-transfiguration, as the rays of morning struck the white shield of her expectation—her mind seized on the poet's figure avidly. And this particular Spring filled her strangely with a sense of something about to be

revealed to her; an inner voice was exclaiming: "Now, now."

She had been at home a month, she reflected, as she descended the steps of her apartment-house on the north of the square, and walked indecisively to the corner of the Avenue. Miss Malden felt a pleased consciousness, indeed, of accord with the day; her writing that morning had moved with a stride; her mental alertness had been a tangible, joyous quality. The warmth and candor of the afternoon had led her to put on a gown of some pale gray stuff; she added a boa of filmy gray chiffon about her neck, suited to the clear pallor of her skin; and, after an instant of hesitation, she had caught up a daffodil from a bunch sent her that morning, and thrust it into her belt.

It was a question, as she lingered on the corner, though not a grave matter, whether she should take a stage or walk. The appearance of Dakin settled the doubt.

"Caroline," he said, gratefully, "you are back with us again! When did you tear yourself away from your primitive facts and your elemental types in—where is it you've been, anyway? You're the wraith—no, the materialized wraith of the Spring day—in your grays and yellows. Come, now, erase that look of 'stage or no stage,' and walk with me up the Avenue, and we'll go to see Jeannette Mills, and drink her tea, and hear who's in and who's an outsider."

It was a genuine pleasure to see Dakin; the composed maturity of him, his simple acceptance of the liberties of friendship, his compass of the art of stimulating her to give to him all that the subtle compliment of his attitude toward her asked, gratified her. She came to Dakin, she realized in a flash, always with reassurance, with the little sense of having forgotten how desirable he was.

Laughing, she began to answer in the eager speech he liked: "From Butte, Montana, Chester—which your sophistication can't grasp. Tell me, have you ever been west of Sixth

avenue? A month ago I got back, and you've not been to see me, faithless person. I'd love to drink Jeanette's tea—and perhaps I'll find I'm an outsider now, myself."

"I have been away, fishing in Florida—came back only last night, and I give you my word I was on my way to see you at the moment."

"Still fishing, and killing things, and traveling everywhere, and doing everything that people demand of you socially?" she asked, half reproachfully.

"Yes," he replied. "Still doing all that, Caroline. But let me off this good Spring day, and let's play happily together. Tell me of yourself."

"There's nothing to tell—don't I always begin that way? I've been away for six months, and I am rash enough to believe I have the stuff for the best novel I've ever done—here." She touched her head impressively.

"My dear girl, when you do your best novel, you'll have to have it here." He repeated her gesture, gravely touching his heart.

"Mine or yours?" she asked, ruefully.

"Yours—you've known mine these five years," Dakin returned, solemnly.

"Please, Chester—not to-day," Miss Malden caught him up with nervous haste.

"Am I never to achieve—anything?"

Dakin smiled at the somewhat obvious implication of his sentence. Miss Malden snatched at the opening with a quick idea of protection.

"You are to achieve everything—if you only will. Oh, Chester, Chester—you wrest nothing but grace and smiles from the world; I'm always saying it, and boring you dreadfully, but I believe so in results, things done and accomplished. It's my creed; every day I grow older I confess to it."

Dakin put in with gentle irrelevance, "However old you grow, Caroline, you'll always be younger than the rest of us."

Miss Malden laughed. "You're a dear; you leave me with my stupid old sermons as dust in my mouth."

"Why do you care so for my results, as you academically call them? Can't you accept *me*, without them? There must be a me that you have found, well, not unpleasing—take that. Must I be famous to count really with you?"

"I care for the evidences of work and energy spent—I can't help it; they are strong with me—the successes; I glory so in the fact of success. You"—she smiled apologetically—"are the only one who upsets my theories." His words had sent her mind swiftly to her meeting with Peter Bridge, to her discomposure.

"In other words, my dear Caroline, your Leander must swim the Hellespont to get you? If I had become a senator, or a great sculptor, or had created a colossal trust; if I crushed a thousand men in a wheat deal, or sang 'Home, Sweet Home' to the ecstatic sorrow of a vast audience; above all, if I had done a great book"—Miss Malden flushed unguardedly—"you might not be averse to marrying me?"

"It might help," she admitted, soberly.

Dakin sighed. "Perhaps you are right. Often you are—always, maybe, in reading me. 'To the end Spring winds will sow disquietude.'"

In the subsequent moments of silence, they met Peter Bridge. The unexpected encounter brought again—to her anger—the quick color to Miss Malden's cheeks; Bridge, indeed, paused, as if to halt them, then, breaking the illogical awkwardness of the meeting, bowed, lower, to be sure, than was necessary, and with an assured "How do you do, Miss Malden?" went by.

Miss Malden spoke resentfully and against her desire not to explain.

"He—I met him, by chance, in the train, coming East, a month ago. He is interesting; he is bound to do great things, I believe. He comes from some little town in the Middle West—Illinois, as I remember."

"Ah, a result—if you'll allow the word. I cannot compete with them," said Dakin, slowly shaking his head.

Miss Malden was betrayed into irritation.

"It's not a question of competition, my dear Chester. Here we are at Jeannette's."

"By-the-bye," Dakin remarked, as they stood at the door, "I am leaving for Illinois to-morrow night—some beastly matter of legal business over some property of mine there. I shall be away perhaps a fortnight."

"It's shabby of you to go just as I get back to town," Miss Malden answered. All at once, she felt a nervous premonition of something ill, unwelcome, overturning.

III

PARTING from Dakin at the Millses', and this with foreboding reluctance, Miss Malden had wandered in on other friends, later keeping an engagement with a girl she had known in college days. And, finding the renewal of this memorial friendship suddenly intolerable, she had broken away, on some slight plea, and had come home.

It was no surprise to her to find Peter Bridge at the hansom step on reaching home. He said, defensively: "I knew you had this engagement to-night, but I waited around here, hoping you might by chance come home early—I wanted to see you—and now you have come."

The unreasoning resentment in her that she, in fact, had come, tempted her, indeed, to go at once into the house. But her eyes falling on Bridge, bare-headed, the glow of a near-by electric lamp falling on his loose dark hair and sharpening the cameo beauty of his face—which in the uncertain illumination held a hitherto unsuspected spirituality—rested there gratefully.

"Well, then?" she laughed, commiserating herself.

"Would you mind coming into the Park? It's deserted now—fairly. We can sit there somewhere."

She went with him; there was nothing in Caroline Malden of a trivial conventionality to embarrass her accept-

ance of the opportunity; her hesitation was an involuntary mental recoil against something she derided herself for.

Miss Malden let him take her, and his air of protection did not lessen his value, to a bench in the thick shadows of the Park. They were alone, for the few about were of a sort too alien to distract. She leaned back, watching him, the heavy, breathless, inert heat of the late April night hanging around her.

Bridge began, abruptly.

"You have been—are—mighty good to me—you've taken me in, a stranger"—he disregarded her gesture of protest—"you have; you have introduced me to your kind, the best kind, too, and you've let me know, best of all—yourself."

His possession of her was astounding, she thought. What right—?

Her reply—he waited for it—was distant enough.

"You need not thank me—it was the courtesy of a fellow-craftsman to another—if it has been anything at all—to you."

"Anything?" he repeated, with an unmistakable intonation. "It has been—why do I use that tense constantly—is what I have dreamed of, hoped for, despaired of," he went on floridly. The shifting of a heavy tree-shadow from his face left it suddenly bare to the lights; she gasped at its beautiful elation.

"You don't know—you couldn't—what it's all been for me before this. I want to tell you of myself," he proceeded in a low voice, "so you'll—understand."

She gave him a quick glance.

What did it matter what she understood? she wondered, but her eyes fell before his.

Bridge pushed his hair from his forehead. "Oh, it's always been hell for me. My father—he hated me, I don't know why; we had nothing in common. Out there on that little miserable farm, as a lad, I've lain many a night in the corn-fields till morning, afraid to go in and see his hateful face. I used to

dream things out there—big things, the kind of things you represent. And my mother, she was good to me when she had time—but she despised her life there and brooded over it till—it's a rough story, hers—till one day—I was a kid and didn't understand—she ran off with some man. Couldn't stand it any longer. She was handsome, my mother. I don't know why she ever took to my father. And—afterward I got a letter from her once; and I didn't hear any more till I was fifteen, and then a young fellow, who came along selling books, told a story of a woman getting shot in a—a place you couldn't imagine—oh, it was all terrible. And—he mentioned the name of the woman—it was hers—great God, big as I was I cried all night out on the prairie—I'll—I'll—never forget that. I've had to work, Lord, how I've worked. He—my father—gave me no pay, and the little schooling I got, I almost stole. But I read—books a preacher lent me, and a lot of paper-covered things my mother had hidden under the floor of the loft. They made me crazy to see things, to do things, to be things— You don't mind my telling all this?" he broke off.

"It's—no, go on," she said, fascinatedly.

"He drank like a beast after mother went, and the place got into pitiful shape. Poor—we starved—I almost gave up hope. There didn't seem to be any use of anything. But still I kept seeing things *big*, you know, and then—thank God, he died. I was seventeen."

"And then?" Miss Malden said, sharply.

"Then?" he hesitated painfully, but recovered and continued doggedly. "I got my chance. An uncle and his wife took the place. I stayed with them. And—and they were kind, according to their lights—and sent me to school when I could be spared. Later, I had a time of running wild—you wouldn't want to hear that—it's not very pleasant—none of it is pleasant, God knows; but that—well, a cousin of mine, their son, came home, to die they thought.

He—he was a bright fellow, had a good education and had been East and all that. He'd—why he was only thirty-two and I was twenty-four then—he'd taught school, and there was a fire in the building, and he was fearfully burned and crippled, trying to save people. Somehow—I can't tell it very well—he didn't die, then; they got him home, and he lasted three years—poor fellow. Oh, it was cruel to see him, misshapen and scarred and agonized. He wouldn't see any one but me and his parents. He—he talked to me about writing, and encouraged me, and told me I could get on, and—and criticized the things I tried to put on paper, and—and, well, he—died at last."

"Poor boy," murmured Miss Malden, the picture of the broken life haunting her miserably.

"Him?"

She nodded.

"It had to be—that way."

"And you—?" she asked, slowly.

He turned from her, and his words were almost unintelligible; the strength had left his voice, and he muttered, "I?—I went on—writing—and then came 'Hampden'—and now"—he whispered, with a sudden facing of her—"and now *you*."

There was no protesting; it had gone too far for that; it was indeed—"and now you." Inevitably he had taken her into his life, and, at the moment, struggle seemed unavailing. His crude story fastened on her intense imagination until, strangely enough, it seemed to her as if she had shared that mean life with him. Yet the appeal of the man beside outweighed the appeal of the story; vaguely she was conscious that the pathos of it all had not wrung her heart—she had not said "Poor boy!" to Bridge. It gave her a sense of personal pride in Bridge that he had conquered so splendidly, and had come out with his beauty and his achievement so tremendously unscathed.

In the silence that followed his confessions, she, wondering at the impulse, took his hand. He crushed hers in his murmuring again, "And now you."

"It has all been equipment," Miss

Malden said, at length, withdrawing her hand with a feeling of relief. She could not find any sincerity of sympathy for the man, fired though she was by the greatness of his struggle.

He was more subdued than she had ever seen him when he replied.

"Equipment?—yes, for much; but for all—all that a man, when he has found it, cries out with his whole mind and soul for—is it equipment for that?"

Something in her swayed at his presence; back somewhere, her mind—hitherto her rock of defense—stood firm, but she could not now command it. It was absurd to pretend not to understand him; she was not a woman of trifling. With a wrench, she forced back something of her wonted sense of security, and rose.

"I must go in," she said, not unkindly.

"You shall answer—some day."

She shivered as she laughed, "Every one must answer—for every thing—some day."

He quivered under her words. As they parted, he said, haltingly: "I wanted you to know it all—and understand. And may I bring you the manuscript of the new book to read?"

"Oh, I *must* see it. Come! come soon!" she cried, eagerly.

Yet her first act on reaching her rooms was to wrench the wilted daffodil from her belt and fling it away—for Bridge had sent the flower to her that morning.

IV

THE reading of the manuscript of Bridge's novel left Caroline Malden with cold hands and amazed, humbled brain. To her, to whom the power of herself to write was a constantly recurrent marvel, that ability, enhanced ten-fold, in so untried and formless—for so he impressed her at every turn—a person as Peter Bridge was little short of miraculous. There had always been that in her which came near to worshiping at the seats of the mighty in literature. And this "desperado in letters"—so she had early

called him—this man who had discovered himself to her, who had given himself into her keeping—to find him with what seemed to her the very intimate spark from the divine altar—oh, it was tremendous.

"The power of him!" she cried; "the unconserved force!"

Miss Malden paced the room in her excitement, tingling with the potentiality of it all. Here was the breadth of "Hampden," to be sure; the crudities of construction and of English; the prodigality of material; the sweep and breathlessness of treatment; but there was more—there was a subtlety, an inevitableness of character work, she phrased it, lacking in the former book.

It was like a breath of clean wind in hot, shut-up rooms, to be associated with a man who could create such a novel. She had to face her elation, and, analyst that she was, she perceived that the fact of her possession of Bridge was a potent factor therein. This book of his, she owned reluctantly, did much to break down the barriers that her mind kept involuntarily raising against the man and his former life. The appeal that his physical charm had for her, she felt, in her solitary moments, she could combat, but to lose the antagonism of her brain to him, meant—well, much more than she, at the instant, cared to think into words.

That Bridge was in love with her, she did not trouble to dispute. This new relation with Bridge affected her as none before in her thirty-five years. The very fact of its daring, its incongruity—he was, surely, much younger than she—attracted her.

"I have outlived the period of the *grande passion*," she assured herself in her nervous walk, "that, I admit. I am not sure that I want marriage—yet— There's no use of me trying to hide under the cover of the lady patron, the noble woman friend—he's to be more to me than that relation offers—or he's nothing. He can't be kept at arm's length— Oh, I wish to heaven he'd never come my way. I

can't reconcile him to my life. Yet—yet now, at this moment, I can't let him go."

She was not shut to the fact that few women can easily give up their hold on a man, once it has become established; it is not so much that they are loath to suffer as that they shrink from the gap thus to be made in their habit of life and thought.

Miss Malden left the personal for the more impersonal as she said: "It is a wonderful piece of work—wonderful. The time has come for people to know of him, to give him his due praise." She had never compassed Bridge's reluctance to keep the secret of his authorship of his books; it had always seemed more a boyish caprice than any well-defined logical reason.

"His idea of succeeding with people on the strength of himself unaided is trivial. The very fact of his achievement is too much *himself* to conceal it. If he's anything, he's his work. But—I wonder what would happen to him if people really *knew*? Would it spoil him for everything—for me?" she deliberated, half smiling at her attitude. "And I wonder what Chester Dakin would say of him, if he knew? Chester is a just judge, at least."

Beyond the instant appreciation of Bridge's personal and unusual beauty, Miss Malden recognized that the men and women with whom she had brought him in contact had not found him wonderfully acceptable. Jeannette Mills had said of him, "Caroline, you have annexed Narcissus—are you his mirror? Frankly, my dear, he's a beautiful ornament, but is he anything else?" and Miss Malden, with an indignation not all assumed, had replied: "I'm not a collector of Greek gods. Wait."

Her eagerness to talk made the servant's announcement that Mr. Bridge was in the drawing-room peculiarly pleasant. She hurried to him, her hands outstretched. The light in her eyes assured Bridge even before her words came. And he flushed deeply, troubled by some inward shrinking, it seemed.

"Well?" he said, shortly.

"You are wonderful," she flashed at him.

"It is good, then?"

"Tremendous."

"Then I'm content. I've only one thought—that's to please you," he said, with sudden intensity of mouth and eyes.

Miss Malden quivered under the tone.

"You do more than that—you will please the world—What is it? Where is it in you?" she went on, solemnly. "You constantly annoy me with your power to write. I can't understand it—I can't find it in you. How came you by it?" She put her hand on his arm, looking intently into his face—his eyes avoiding hers.

"This voice of yours crying in the wilderness—what *right* have you to it?"

Bridge shrank back from her. He bent over the little fire in the grate, and savagely thrust the poker into the embers. When he again turned to her, his face was older, she thought, less perfect, with traces of a consuming struggle; yet his smile was gay and tender.

"God gave it to me that I might win you," he said, slowly. And, on the instant, she believed him, and was silent in the truth of his words. She let him take her hand, yet, when he bent to kiss her, she smiled sorrowfully, "Not yet."

Later they fell into talk of his book.

"I recognized your mother's story in it," said Miss Malden.

The trouble in his eyes led her to shift abruptly to something else she wanted much to say.

"Next week there are to be half-a-dozen people here at my house—Jeannette Mills—you know her—Fabian, the publisher, Burrows, the editor of *The Light*, and two or three others. And I want you to come." He smiled eager acquiescence. "I want you to read from this new book of yours—will you?"

"Oh, I can't. I—no, really, I—forgive me, I couldn't. You see—" he stammered nervously.

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"You must. I insist. You sha'n't betray your secret. I'll say that a— a cousin, if you like, wrote it and— what is it?"

Bridge had paled in a ghastly way. "Nothing," he muttered. "The room is hot. I'm a little tired, I think. Don't bother."

She brought him something to drink, and after a moment went on, less assuredly: "I want you to do this—for—for reasons. You can say anything you like, only Fabian must hear it. The thing is too wonderful for him to miss." Seeing he hesitated, she added: "To please me. Please— Peter."

His name, new on her lips, transformed him. "I will. I'll do anything on God's earth to please *you*. I'm silly, I suppose, about keeping it secret, but if you say it sha'n't be known just yet, as mine—I'll do it—for you."

His acceptance won him more, perhaps, than he guessed, with her.

"You'll keep my secret, though?" he added.

She assented with a laugh.

They talked on till late in the afternoon, and, when he left her, Miss Malden knew for the first time that she was, indeed, to be more to Bridge than a friend.

V

MISS MALDEN had said, indifferently at the beginning, that she wanted them to hear Mr. Peter Bridge read portions of an unprinted novel, freshly written by a friend—Bridge had stipulated "friend"—of his. She had found it of more than usual interest, she added, and knew that they, too, would like the chance to hear it.

Jeannette Mills had whispered to Burrows: "This is a little the worst that Caroline has ever done. Foisting this on us. What in the world possesses her? She'll be giving stereopticon lectures yet."

Burrows nodded, gossipy. "There isn't anything—er—of more than—a—literarily romantic about this, is

there? He's very good to look at. Can't tell what the female novelist is likely to do, you know."

Jeannette Mills shook her head in horrified dissent at his facetiousness. Bridge had begun speaking.

He was looking exceedingly handsome in the evening dress he had easily taken to; his eyes shifted rapidly, but his voice, low, restrained, held their attention wonderfully. Briefly, but with rising enthusiasm, he began to outline the plot of the tale. Fabian, a heavy, idol-faced man, adjusted his eye-glasses, and stared woodenly at Bridge.

Presently, Bridge began to read—with no attempt at elocutionary effect, but eagerly, in a low-pitched voice, slurring his vowels, and in the gradual cumulation of intensity, racing along at top-speed, yet with a sharp, cutting distinctness.

Miss Malden, herself keyed to the utter importance of the test which she had planned, in reality, as a justification to herself, watched keenly the faces of her guests. Fabian's narrow eyes began to glitter, and Burrows's thin, skeptical face warmed to shrewd admiration; Jeannette Mills and the others forgot the attitudes of polite sufferance, and listened obliviously. The triumph was Miss Malden's; the smile in her eyes was like a flood of sun on fields long shadowed.

It wanted only the silent entrance of Dakin to complete the assurance of the hour. He slipped into a chair beside Miss Malden, with a gesture of apology for his tweed traveling clothes; she gave him a quick smile of pleasure, understanding, forgiveness; then forgot to watch his face.

When Bridge finished, he dropped his manuscript on a table, and left the room abruptly. The low murmur of admiration, started by Jeannette Mills, swelled, in the ensuing freedom of the reader's absence, into a chatter of eager praise.

"Caroline, my *dear*, that is perfectly stunning stuff," she cried, "*stunning!* A friend of Mr.—Mr.—yes—Bridge wrote it, you say? Do you know

the man? It's the best thing of the year."

Burrows eyed Fabian interrogatively under cover of the general exclamation. Fabian nodded impressively.

"I think so, too," said Burrows, eagerly.

"It's great," said the publisher between his teeth, gutturally. "There's been nothing that can touch it, of its kind, except——"

"I know," went on Burrows. "You mean 'Hampden,' eh? I thought so. It's like it, but it's better stuff than that book, though. Eh, Miss Malden? We were saying the book bids fair to be better than 'Hampden'—did you read that?"

She flushed excitedly, too elated for many words, and, after a moment of appreciation, went on. She wondered vaguely where Dakin was. Burrows continued to talk in low, concise tones to Fabian. She caught, with sharpened ears "Serial rights," and, "At least forty or fifty thousand copies."

Miss Malden's desire to see Bridge was so strong that she slipped silently from the drawing-room, and into the dining-room. Bridge stood by the buffet pouring himself a drink; Dakin was beside him. She saw that Bridge's hands were shaking; Dakin, more than ever, was his cool, unapproachable, contained self. The sight of the two together discomposed her for an instant. Their contrast, to her, knowing them both from within, was, all at once, absurdly glaring. There was a touch of pity in her heart for Dakin, the older friend; all that he had been to her, and it was much, seemed to balance so trivially with the triumph of Bridge.

"You two out here alone, convivially gossiping! What disloyalty! Chester, I'm so pleased that you turned up to-night. I needed you to complete the evening. Wasn't it splendid?"

Dakin answered, soberly: "It was—splendid, Caroline. Mr. Bridge's friend is to be congratulated."

She smiled at his commendation. "Isn't it so?" and turned to Bridge, standing silent and ill at ease.

Dakin continued, evenly: "I was just saying to Mr. Bridge that I left only yesterday his native state—Illinois, I believe. I spent a night in a little place, Floydsville, which he tells me is near his own town—I think you said?" Bridge nodded.

"Then you two will have plenty to talk over—but you sha'n't do it now. I claim him myself, Chester," she cut in, authoritatively.

Reading, with sorry acuteness, her desire to be alone with Bridge, Dakin bowed and strolled away, a queer shadow in his eyes.

Miss Malden seized Bridge's hands, impulsively. "Peter, Peter—you were splendid, they're all talking of you; you—you have *won*."

Bridge pulled himself together with a sharp effort; his face tense; his fingers gripping hers.

"All?" he whispered, brokenly. "Have I won all? My God, tell me!"

"All," she breathed, half-frightened.

He bent and kissed her, tears standing in his eyes.

"I couldn't bear to stay there," he said, some moments later, "and hear them. It meant so much to me—and I knew that it was, in a way, your test of me. Oh, yes, it was. Tell me, dearest, if it hadn't been for the book, would you, could you—could I, the plain I, have won?"

Miss Malden laughed, nervously. "But your books are you. There is no you, to me, outside of them, don't you see? And, if you hadn't written them, why, I'd never have known you, Peter."

He sighed. "And then I'd be just your 'sounding brass,' wouldn't I?"

"You're an angel, tongues and all—come, we must go back."

The enthusiasm only broke out afresh at the entrance of Bridge. The little group clustered round him greedily, plying him with questions; Fabian edged up to him puffily. And Bridge, flushing like a boy in the excitement of their candid interest, and his own double secret, answered eagerly, his eyes aflash, his breath coming sharply.

The punch was brought, and Dakin, stepping quietly into the circle, raised

his glass; his eyes were on the tall, handsome figure of Bridge. "I want to propose a health to the unknown author," he said, slowly and distinctly. He saw Bridge waver, but only for an instant. They drank, eagerly receptive of the idea, Bridge with them, with cries of approval and praise.

An impulse, too dramatic, too triumphant for the artist in her to put aside, swept Caroline Malden. She caught Bridge by the hand and, in a breathless, laughing excitement, drew him forth. "My friends, *this* is the unknown author. *This* is he—the author of 'Hampden' and of—" Her voice was lost in the shout of instant congratulation, as her guests beset him. They wrung his hands; the men clapped him heavily on his back, with loud praises; Jeannette Mills flung him her bunch of violets. Only Caroline Malden noticed angrily that Dakin made no recognition of the news.

Through it all Bridge stood white and immovable, his eyes wandering helplessly. His face, that had, at first, flushed purple, was ghastly pale.

"It's secrets," continued Miss Malden, her face radiant at Bridge's great moment; secretly she was a little irritated over the way he was taking his honors. "I have betrayed Mr. Bridge shamelessly. The one condition on which he promised to read to-night was that I should not tell you all the truth, that he wrote the book. Keep the secret for me—won't you? Don't let it out for a few days." She smiled understandingly at Bridge for reassurance and clemency.

But the evident disquietude of the man over his betrayal, and his distraught manner, presently had its effect; the group broke up, and with some final words of familiar, exaggerated commendation, drifted homeward, Fabian saying, "Mind, at one to-morrow, Mr. Bridge, for luncheon." Bridge bowed, absently.

"Wait in the library," whispered Miss Malden to Peter in passing. Dakin approached him, and said something rapidly in a low, flat tone. Bridge

nodded, a hurt look in his eyes as if of some racking pain.

"You'll tell her?" he muttered, hopelessly appealing.

Dakin assented. "To-night—you'd better go."

"Great God, man, you don't understand, you don't understand!" cried Bridge, putting out his hands to ward off the blow. "I love her." He staggered away from Dakin, who shook his head reluctantly.

So it was, after all, Dakin who stayed, after the others had gone that night. Caroline Malden, with Bridge's name softly on her lips, found him in the library, gazing sternly into the little bed of coals on the hearth. His eyes, pitying yet honest, met hers, bewildered and questioning and foreboding.

VI

THERE were no preliminary fencings between the two old friends. He shook his head at her gesture toward a chair, and she accepted the refusal, wearily sinking into a low seat near the fire.

"Well?" she said at length, in a voice that demanded the utmost he had to impart.

"I want you to listen to a story. Something that happened to me on this journey of mine," he began simply. Miss Malden suddenly felt anew the clarity of Dakin's personality, the gentleness in him, and the justness—felt it in an amazement that this instant could so re-reveal it all to her.

"I told you, perhaps, that my trip was to include the inspection of some farms that my father had acquired in Illinois—in fact most of my stay was in the lower part of that state in some hopeless, God-forsaken little towns. But that part of my story is unimportant enough. A week ago, it was, I'd been driving about all day with a man—I hired him and his 'buggy' to pilot me about. I was aching tired—we'd driven since morning, you know, and the horse was a wreck. Toward night it began to rain, a great thundering

flood, that presently settled into the most drenching downpour you can imagine. We were miles from our point of supplies—I mean clothes and lodgings. To add to the wet misery of it all the wagon wheel 'buckled on us.' Well, briefly, we crawled on in the rain to a little four corners, called Floyds-ville—just a store and a blacksmith's shop and some houses, and besought the people at the nearest house—a decent enough farm-house—for shelter. There were only a man and his wife, old and outworked; they hesitated, but we told them our wretched state, and after a while they went into an inner room where we heard whispering. Then they came out, and said we might stay there for the night. They gave us some dry clothes and supper, good and hot, and it wasn't long before my driver crawled off to bed. I stayed to talk with the two by the kitchen stove.

"They weren't given to talking though; beyond the fact that they said the farm had come to them from a brother of the man—who, I gathered, was a bad lot—they said little else except that their son was an invalid. He never saw any one. He'd been hurt, I found by questioning, in some fire, years before.

"The woman kept going into the sick man's room, and each time she returned she looked more anxious. 'Is he worse?' said the father; she answered, 'Yes—he's having another of his bad spells.' I offered my assistance, but they refused point-blank. Presently, they left me alone there with the groans of that sick fellow in my ears. It was pretty bad. When the father came out again, he told me that he was going for the doctor, and asked if I'd mind keeping about till he returned—it seems he had to go ten miles to the next village.

"The mother came out, crying—Lord, it was mighty unpleasant. 'He wants to be lifted—I can't do it,' she said. 'Why, I'll do it,' I told her. 'He won't let any one see him,' was all I could get out of her. 'Ask him if I can't help—tell him I'm an Easterner, going away to-morrow, I'll never see

him again—persuade him somehow,' I begged her. He must have heard my voice for he called out, suddenly, 'Let him come if he wants to, mother.' You should have seen her look. 'He ain't done that before ever since he's been sick,' she said, motioning me to follow her.

"Good God, Caroline, I hope never again to see so awful a living human being—his thin, weazened face was bitterly scarred and disfigured—livid—he was drawn and bent and misshapen. It took all my nerve not to start at the sight. Well, you know, my brother was ill for years, and I got used then to a sick-room, so I wasn't all at odds with the situation; I helped all I could, talking with him, and giving him a little brandy I happened to have in a flask. And the fellow took to me in some way, and, by-and-bye, sent his mother out of the room. And then his pain began to ease up a bit, and he talked. I sat there by his bed for hours. It was as if I were speaking to some hideous shape that held a beautiful soul, imprisoned there by an old witch's black art—I wish you could have seen his eyes—they were beautiful and absolutely unspoiled. I—some way—I can't explain it—we got on tremendously. After a while he began, in a feeble voice, to tell me his own story—if you could have heard it! There was copy for you, solemn, awful copy. He'd been a teacher—Oh, I can't give the pathos, and strangeness, and unreality, and tragedy of him—and then had been injured in this fire, and had gone home to die. But he didn't die—he lived; and lying there—he told me that he'd not seen a single other face save that of his parents, the doctor, and a cousin, for years—he began to imagine things, and presently they took shape and form. I should explain that this cousin, it appears, was a wild, handsome fellow, whose father had died and left his parents the farm they were on. He was a brilliant ne'er-do-well, who, after trying a dozen things, got into a nasty mess over a forged cheque, and had come home to live with them. The sick chap liked

him—he was only weak, not bad—and took him in. As I was saying, these things in his mind took shape, and he began to dictate stuff to this cousin of his. Later it all worked out into a novel called—” Dakin hesitated, loath to strike the blow.

““Hampden,”” said Miss Malden, inevitably.

He bowed. “You know that book’s success. And then he wrote another, his aunt’s story, he said—never by word or line letting the world know who wrote that first book. His publishers did not even guess—his pen name is John Peters, I believe, and his cousin, so he told me, was now East here, to place the story with a better publisher. You talk of mute Miltons—that man lying there in that mean little bedroom—God, I can’t forget it.” Dakin paused, his eyes turned from Miss Malden. Outside, the sharp, distant clang of a trolley-car, the rattle, and oncoming clatter of an elevated train reached them in the purposeless silence of the room.

“Well,” she said again, without emphasis.

“Some time—long after—the doctor came, and we stayed on together, with his parents, watching. About dawn he—he died. I stayed until after it was all over— That’s all.”

His waiting silence was merciful to her. She made no attempt to analyze her emotions; she gave no sign, save increased pallor, of anything she might have been fighting, or repressing, or accepting. For Dakin it was all pity.

“You had to know,” he said, at last, slowly.

She nodded. “Yes, I had to know.”

He made as if to leave the room, but she held up her hand imperatively.

“Does he know?” she said in a low, colorless tone.

“That I know the truth of it? Yes.”

“But of the death?”

“No—I think not—they couldn’t reach him here.”

“Then don’t tell him.”

Dakin assented gravely. It was as if Miss Malden were about to speak further, but she turned away, instead,

and Dakin left her, doubtful yet sure. When he had gone, it seemed to Caroline Malden, oddly enough, that a great comfort had gone out of her presence.

VII

AFTER all, she had room to reflect, as she sat there alone, in the immediate emptiness of Dakin’s departure, after all, she had been a fool, so to cherish the “preciousness” of her relation with Bridge; for it had been precious, that was undeniably open to her. It was difficult—perhaps impossible, for that matter—to compass, at present, more than her own hurt. She was hurt, she eagerly confessed, hurt and sore and indignant. The last feeling would not bear probing, she knew; for it was really an indignation that had its sources in her humiliation over the part she had allowed herself to play. She preferred to hold before her eyes the dull fact that her dream had been only an impossible illusion; that life could mean, from now on, only work, work, work. Incongruously, she wondered how this experience *would* affect her writing.

But Bridge—there was a tangible factor! He had lied; he had played a coward’s game; he had cheated her—and her position in the world only added to the shame of it—and that other, the dead man. Oh, it was contemptible from every standpoint. It was easy to be angry here. She had cause, she felt, righteous cause, and the act of thinking anger, logically brought reinforced anger to her; in the outward expression of it she leaped to her feet, and paced the room turbulently. Anger in her eyes like a little green flame. There was to her an exalted satisfaction in this; it enfolded her mind and kept her from the enervating pity she was bound to feel, sooner or later, for Bridge.

So it happened that in this excited period she faced Bridge in the doorway. In a flash she gauged him, and, such was the abnormal sharpness of the moment, she knew him at his best.

It was, in the end then, to be pity for Bridge; the fact of his love for her assured him that boon. The absurdity of anger now made her smile bitterly. The wind was out of her sails at the sight of his wretchedness.

It was as if, in the brief time their eyes met, he, too, read her absolutely; read the end as well as the beginning of all that had been between them, and accepted it with more simplicity than he had ever shown. Things were amazingly simplified for both of them, indeed.

The note of their meeting was sounded.

"I had to come back," he said, quietly, "you knew that."

"Yes," Miss Malden said, "you had to come back."

"There is no need to go over it all," he continued; "over all the truth he told you."

She assumed a question in his voice and replied: "No, you can't better it—or make it much worse, can you?"

Bridge shook his head. "But there was the extenuating circumstance."

The pleading of this was like Bridge; it would, she knew, for all its shallowness in the face of honor, always be his hold on her.

She put it into words, "The circumstance of your love for me?"

"Yes, yes; that! That's real—it's the most real part of me. That's the real me—my love for you. Everything else has gone; and now it's over I'm glad of it. And I'm left with that only—but it's much. It can't be called sounding brass—that." He came closer to her. "You won't rob me of that—this love? You won't leave me destitute, will you?" He laughed in pathetic triumph. "Oh, you can't take that from me; my love for you is mine, to keep always. I don't want anything more than that. I'd be a fool to ask it. I know all I am, better than you because I've lived with it; it's slept with me, and walked with me, and almost driven me crazy."

It was Bridge's moment; she acknowledged it. In all that was to

happen, he would still be splendid in this.

"But that love can never replace, or make good, the honor you have lost," Miss Malden had to say.

He winced, but met it bravely.

"It will help me," he said, unaffectedly.

The thought of herself obtruded for a moment.

"You have hurt me, and shamed me, and—lied to me, terribly. Couldn't you have spared me anything in all this?" she said, half-impatiently. "What was it you hoped for?" she added. The question had to come some time.

His abasement was utter. "You—you are right to say it. I deserve everything, every punishment. Oh, it is punishment—I'm bound to suffer for it always. You'll forget. You must forget—because you never loved me."

His penetration left her with no word.

"I'll keep the bitterness of it, and the joy of it always," he repeated, doggedly. "You can say that a man who would do as I have done—lied and cheated and forged—I did forge—will never pull up. He's weak, you'll say, when you argue it all out, and he'll come to a bad end. I'm bad enough now, but you must know this—you'll believe me this once?—I never before loved any woman. That's God's truth."

He took up her previous question. "You want to know why I did it all—hurt you, and shamed you, and lied? Well, that day, in the train when I saw you and recognized you—I knew, all at once, that I was going to love you—that's falling in love, isn't it? And then you let me talk to you. It came over me that I wasn't anything under the sun that could hold you to me. You talked of people having to show results and—well, I wanted to 'show off,' as they say of little boys. I began to lie—not definitely thinking that anything would come of it all. You see I wanted some of *you*—I was awfully alone. And you gave me

yourself. You can't think what it was to feel that you—you, who were beautiful, and successful and *wonderful* to me—admired me. I forgot that I wasn't what you thought; sometimes I thought I must be—almost. Then here in New York—why, I loved you—not for your writing or your place in letters, or your mind—I just loved *you*. And I knew miserably, underneath, that all I was to you was those books. I couldn't give you up—God help me! Don't ask how I expected to keep up my deception; how I was to go on writing books and fooling you. I don't know. I didn't think that far. It was all *now* and *you* to me." He stopped abruptly, then added, "It may be wrong—but I'd do it all again to win you, God knows."

Miss Malden was crying silently, without bitterness, and with a pity, somehow, as great for herself as for the man before her.

When he spoke again, it was with the awkwardness of his plight in his face.

"If there is anything I can do to make this right with—with the others——?"

She controlled her voice. "The making of conditions seems trivial now. You have left me with nothing to say. Would you understand if I told you that, in some vague way I am grateful to you for showing me myself? But I must ask of you this: Will you tell those people who were here to-night enough of the truth to—to——?"

"Yes. I'll do that," he said, humbly.

There seemed nothing more to say. Indeed, unspokenly, but understandingly, they had traversed the whole ground as with a harrow. Their silence but cumulated into an anguish for them both. Bridge turned to go;

his eyes, for once firm, took in the room hungrily, and then came back to her for a long, devouring pause. She felt them, but did not meet them.

"There is something more," she said, slowly, "that you must know. He—your cousin is dead." She could not avoid the baldness of the words.

He met the news, after the first flinching, strangely.

"Maybe that is my chance."

She did not understand, and let her eyes inquire.

"To go back and help and make good what he never knew I made bad," he explained, hesitatingly.

She nodded, ashamed of her doubt in his capacity.

He read her, as he had during the evening, with preternatural sharpness.

"You don't believe me, do you? You can't think of me as succeeding in—in—right things? I know. And you're justified. Can I ask this? If ever I *am* right—if I make anything right out of my life, if I'm not sounding brass—may I tell you—write to tell you?" he pleaded.

"Yes, you may tell me," she said, gently.

It was all—and more—than she could give; he accepted it, and told her with his eyes the truth of how wonderful she was to him.

"That shall be my result to offer you," he answered, solemnly.

At the door, he turned and said, slowly—it was his only attempt at a farewell—"Do you mind my saying this last thing: If you marry some fellow some day, marry him for himself, for him, what he is—not for anything else."

When she was at last alone, and had free play to think out the truth of it all, she wondered if he had meant—Dakin.



THE EVERLASTING ROUND

WHEN Christmas holidays are o'er
I slap my empty pocket,
And vows to save I straightway score
Upon my mental docket.
I settle down; my balance grows,
By sacrifice expanded—
For Easter clothes and flowers it goes,
And I once more am stranded!

A second time I think that now
I'm done with wild expenses,
And register anew my vow
To patch my gaping fences.
I live within a sober law,
All little pleasures flouting—
And every last red cent I draw
To meet my Summer's outing!

Hotel and other sundries paid,
I'm home, completely busted,
To muse, with feelings sore dismayed,
On talents to me trusted.
But now I *will* save—every groat!
I'll knock off all this bumming—
And suddenly I get a note
Which says that *Nell* is coming!

When Nell has gone—the time we've had
With opera, drive and party!—
A bank account I have, egad!
Still far from hale and hearty!
And, while I swear, with steadfast mind,
That nothing else shall queer me,
And try again—alas! I find
That Christmas looms a-near me!

EDWIN L. SABIN.



PURPOSELY MISUNDERSTOOD

HEWITT—I seldom think of my audience when I'm acting.
JEWETT—But you ought to have some consideration for them.

LOVE'S HUMILITY

I WEAR you as a star upon my breast,
 A seal upon my brow for aye, and sing
 Your love, a song that knows no silencing—
 A triumph-cry that will not be repressed.
 It seems to me, the world is all aflame
 With wonder at my joy; and, when I lift
 My eyes to meet its steadfast watching, swift
 Leaps to my lips the fire of your dear name.

But set me in the sanctum of your soul,
 Close doors of silence on me; go your way,
 Nor speak nor breathe the secret where I hide;
 Fare forth on any path to any goal,
 Only turn heartward, hour by hour, to say
 You love me—so I shall be satisfied!

NANNIE BYRD TURNER.



PERMITTED NONE TO ESCAPE

SHE—It is said that she accepts every man who proposes.
 HE—Yes, and she just as good as accepts a lot who don't.



THE WAY IT HAPPENED

SHE—Archibald was always trying to avoid the girls. Where did he meet
 the one he afterward married?
 HE—He didn't meet her. She overtook him.



A DAM, who was the first man to brag of his salad dressing, was not, unfortunately, the last.

THE MAJOR'S AUTOMOBILE

By Ruth Kimball Gardiner

IT was the only automobile in the state, and the major swelled with pride every time he looked at it. He had gone clear to Chicago to select it, and he had insisted on having the fastest and most completely equipped machine that could be turned out. He had scoffed at insignificant runabouts with a speed of fifteen miles an hour and the ability to run merely forty miles with one charging. Forty miles would not take him once around his farm, he said, and, if he wanted to creep at a snail's pace, he might as well walk and be done with it.

In point of fact the major's farm, if it had been square, which it was not, would have stretched only three miles in each direction, and as for walking, he possessed a wooden leg, and never took one step more than was absolutely necessary. However, he was not speaking under oath. He was merely buying an automobile, and as his nine sections had ripened into Number One Hard Perfection the season before, he felt that no common machine was an adequate expression of his prosperity. His heart was set on something that went by electricity. If he wanted to smell gasoline, he said, he could carry a bottle of it about with him, and sprinkle himself occasionally, and, if he wanted to be hauled around the wheat country by steam, he could hitch a sulky to the traction engine. No, he must have an electric-carriage. His farm-house and his men's quarters and his barns were lighted by electricity, and if the plant on the grounds couldn't supply power for one automobile, he didn't see what it was good for, anyway. He wanted

a blood-red man-eater, he said, with a plate-glass show-window set up in front, and a speed of not less than a mile a minute.

It was, indeed, an exceptional machine, that automobile of his. Even on Michigan avenue it was remarkable. On the boundless prairie of the wheat country its advent was little short of epoch-making. The major wished that the entire state had but a single eye, that he might make it pop out with amazement. With his new wonder, he felt precisely as in his boyhood days he had imagined he would feel if he were ever so unthinkably rich as to own a gilded circus-chariot.

There was only one wrinkle in the rose-leaf of his content. He could not share his new toy with Beresford. He could only toot his horn scornfully as he dashed past the ripening fields of his neighbor. A year ago, he could have talked to Beresford by the hour of generators and batteries and pinion gears and volts and ammeters and all the other intricate wonders of his car. A year ago, Beresford would have been the first man to ride in it, and Beresford's sister, the Hon. Mrs. Durnford, the first woman. In those days, Beresford had been his best friend; a man after the major's own heart; a man, too, after the heart of the major's daughter, with the major's sanction to the seeking. Now, Beresford was a reptile—the loathsome offspring of a race of vipers—an unprincipled, grasping, unscrupulous scoundrel, for whom hanging was too honorable a death.

It was merely a piece of land, which the major contemptuously referred to as "a city backyard," that had re-

vealed Beresford's moral deformity. For years the major had wanted that quarter-section. It belonged to Ole Olson, and the stolid Scandinavian could not be brought to see his plain duty in the matter. He clung to his little patch of wheat, and refused all the major's offers. Then had come the incredible day when, in response to the major's thousandth appeal, the misguided Ole had replied, unemotionally:

"Ae tank Ae sale to Mr. Beresford. He claim he buy."

Now, Beresford was utterly ignorant of the fact that the major's heart was set on that particular quarter-section. He had bought it simply because Olson had offered to sell it, and why Olson refused it to the major only the gods who understand the workings of the Scandinavian mind can tell. The unfortunate Beresford was totally unprepared for the major's subsequent conduct. However, he was not seriously disturbed. He told himself that the major would cool down presently, and things would go on as they had gone on before.

But Beresford did not know the major. In the first flush of his rage, that gentleman had said a great deal more than he had intended to say, but having said it, pride forbade him to retract. He informed his daughter that, if she so much as looked the way Beresford walked, he would pack her off to her aunt in Dresden, and Betty thereafter walked circumspectly, though she privately assured Beresford that a dozen fathers could never make her constancy waver. Even the major could not but admit that a literal adherence to his command concerning Beresford and the direction of her gaze would mean her retirement from the altogether feverish gaiety of the wheat-country Summer. She might refrain from watching Beresford walk, but it was impossible to avoid seeing him across a dinner-table, or even out of the corner of her eye at a dance. There were men and to spare within the sixty-mile radius of local society, but not every man was the son

of a baronet, and a lord of twelve sections of wheat land, without a barren acre or a mortgage on it anywhere. The major could not ask his friends to close their doors to a man simply because he happened to be a reptile, and he did not propose to be driven into outer darkness himself.

As a matter of fact, there is precious little darkness in the short span of the wheat-country Summer. Dawn rouses the baby day in its third hour, and twilight lingers till ten. There is only enough deep blue gloom to give the vain light an excuse to display larger and brighter jewels than other skies possess. The wheat must grow as no weed ever dared grow, and ripen to be clear of the frosts which dog the steps of August, and the sun must hasten his rising and delay his setting to oblige the wheat. In the splendor of the long day, twenty miles to a dinner-party is the merest step. The major had beforetime grumbled at the loss of sleep which Betty's fondness for going everywhere the rest of the two counties went, entailed, but now, with his new automobile, he sniffed invitations from afar as the war-horse the battle. He would go till the automobile fell to pieces rather than that Beresford should have a chance to talk with Betty, or dance with Betty, or hand Betty cake at any picnic.

Early August had come, and the major's nine sections were ready for the cutting. In former years, the major had followed the reapers to the field in a rattletrap gig. Now, he attended the ceremony in his crimson car, and but for the unreasonable obstinacy of the farm horses, he would have headed the procession in a glory such as Solomon's wildest dreams never knew. The major's horses, however, were not pleased with the idea of assisting at a triumphal march. As it was obviously impossible to blind them, and back them all the way to the field, the major was obliged reluctantly to follow, instead of leading. He rolled slowly to the section which touched Beresford's land, and there halted, while the reap-

ing-machines, seven abreast, began their long circuit. Where but an hour before the hosts of the wheat had stood, the thin stubble was strewn with their prostrate forms, contemptuously flung into sheaves, and tossed aside by the clanking, lunging reapers.

On Beresford's land, too, the reapers were cutting their multiple swath, and the forgiving Irishman, in the fullness of his heart, thought the time propitious for bringing about a reconciliation. He rode across the field, and lifted his hat.

"Good morning, major," he called out, quite as if nothing had happened to disturb their friendship, "finest wheat in the state, this."

The major sat in stony silence. Beresford rode nearer.

"Major," he began, "about that bit of land of Olson's, now——"

"Not another word, sir!" roared the major. "You have acted in a way that is beneath contempt, and you know what I think about it. Don't dare at this late day to attempt any apology."

Beresford had long ago offered innumerable apologies, but he let that pass.

"I had no intention of apologizing," he said, easily. "I merely wanted to explain that I bought the land because Miss Betty liked the look of it."

"You bought it to keep me from getting it!" retorted the major.

"Oh, come," said Beresford, "be easy now, major. It's no great matter at all. It's the same as yours already, and 'twill soon be Miss Betty's."

"Betty's!" the major burst out. "Betty's! What the devil do you mean, you impudent scoundrel?"

Beresford flushed.

"It's no use to waste hard words over it," he said. "You know what I mean as well as I do. Miss Betty's done me the honor to say she'll marry me, and we're tired of waiting."

The major turned two shades redder than his automobile.

"Get off my land!" he shouted. "Don't you dare speak my daughter's name, you serpent! You'll wait till

you're black in the face before you marry my daughter. Get off my land before you make me forget myself!"

Beresford turned, and rode toward his own possessions.

"I'll not wait one second longer than Miss Betty bids me," he called back. "I've waited, thinking you'd come to your senses, but I'm at the end of my patience with you. Miss Betty's going to marry me, and I'll be asking no one else to name the day. Just put that in your pipe and smoke it, major."

The major's reply was inarticulate, but emphatic. His state of mind was such that a flock of wet hens were not a circumstance to him for fury. He had been grossly insulted, and Beresford had flung in a taunt for full measure. He quivered with wrath as he turned his crimson car toward home. Only for the sake of the Hon. Mrs. Durnford, he told himself, had he refrained from doing violence to her reptilian brother.

Betty had been a distant witness to the meeting, and one glance at her father's face told her the state of things.

"Pack up your things this instant!" the major ordered. "And don't you dare say one word. I'm going to take you to Fargo."

"To Fargo!" Betty faltered. "Why, when?"

"The sooner the better," said the major. "This state is no fit place for a girl with a lot of vipers running loose. You're going down to Fargo this very day, and you're not going to stop there, either. Dresden is the place for you, and that's where I'm going to send you."

"There's no train before to-morrow," said Betty, fighting for time.

"Train!" cried the major; "we're not going by train. What d'ye reckon I bought that man-eater for if I can't run it eighty miles? You go and pack up your things, and don't you try to irritate me. We're going to start in just one hour."

"Father," said Betty, desperately, "I know perfectly well why you're taking me away, and it isn't a bit of use. You can take me to Siberia if you

like, but I'm going to marry Dick Beresford, and you may as well make up your mind to it."

"Don't irritate me," the major shouted. "I'll take you where that snake of an Irishman can't find you in a thousand years."

"I'll write to him," Betty retorted.

"Write all you like," answered the major, "and much good it'll do you. I reckon they know a thing or two about girls like you in Dresden. You can write a book if you choose, but you go to Fargo in just one hour."

The major's hour had grown into two when at last the red car rolled away across the prairie. On the front seat were the major and Betty. On the back seat lay the boxes which the major meant to leave in the nearest village to be sent on by express. He wanted to travel fast and light, with no unnecessary luggage to interfere with his progress.

Betty was silent. She had despatched a frantic note to Beresford and another to his sister, and she had not yet given up hope. If Beresford could not stop the major, possibly Mrs. Durnford could. At least, they knew what was happening, and Beresford would find some way to see her before she was out of reach. Five minutes' speech with him would suffice to arrange some plan for outwitting her father. Failing that, Betty felt that Dresden spelled despair. She strained her eyes across the wheat, hoping to catch a glimpse of her lover somewhere. The world was all one flat, yellow circle under a blue cup. There was not a cloud in the sky, not a shadow on the sea of grain. Far off on the horizon danced a mirage lake, with green trees beside it. She could see its phantom ripples sparkling in the sun. Presently a grain elevator loomed up, apparently separated from its foundations by a strip of thin air. Another and another building quivered into view, and the automobile's hoarse horn warned the prairie-town of the major's approach. There was a crowd about the door of the small but proudly named hotel to

see him alight, but Beresford was nowhere to be seen.

The major ordered luncheon, but not for a moment did he take his eyes off Betty. The crimson car was safe in the street outside. Nobody in the town knew how to run it, and the major had not even considered it necessary to take out the safety-plug, but he was determined to run no risks with Betty. He had caught one glimpse of a hard-ridden horse that looked like Beresford's, and he did not propose to take any chances. He counted on reaching Fargo in time to take the evening train for the East, and he assured Betty that he would take care of her himself till he saw the steamer sail from New York. He hurried through luncheon, poor Betty dawdling in a vain effort to gain time. Surely Beresford would not fail her. Once the automobile had set off for Fargo, he could not possibly travel fast enough to overtake her, and the thought of the ocean between them was too dreadful to be considered.

The major led her to the waiting car. Her heart gave a leap of joy when she saw Beresford, on his horse beside it. The major merely cast a withering glance at him, and assisted Betty to the back seat.

"One moment, major," Beresford pleaded. "I want to say——"

"Get out of my path!" the major thundered, "or I'll run you down."

He threw the controller on with a jerk. The automobile gave a leap that almost unseated its occupants, and shot ahead at full speed. Beresford's thoroughbred sprang forward and galloped abreast. The major yelled in derision.

"Come on!" he shouted. "I'll run the legs off that horse in a minute!"

The alkali-pale road stretched away across the prairie like a white ribbon, without a break or a turn. The houses of the village flashed past. On dashed the car, the clean-limbed horse racing beside it. Beresford bent above his saddle, and called to Betty:

"It's now or never," he said. "Will

you stay or go? Quick, Betty, I can't keep up this pace much longer!"

"How can I stay?" Betty gasped. "He won't stop."

The major did not so much as deign to turn his head. Let Beresford ride till he dropped. The day was young, and the automobile hardly well under way. He grinned exultantly at his enemy. Beresford drove his spurs home, and his horse almost grazed the wheels. He dropped the bridle, and leaned from the saddle.

"Stand up, Betty!" he shouted. "Hold out your arms."

In a flash his right arm swept out and caught her. With scarcely an effort he lifted her, and swung her clear of the car. The major, looking over his shoulder, tugged frantically to shut off the controller. The automobile still shot ahead at full speed. Beresford, with Betty in his arms, reined in his horse.

"Good-bye, major," he shouted. "I kicked your safety-plug in for you. You'd better stop and take it out."

Stop! The major might as well have tried to stop the sun. His man-eater had the bit between its teeth, his sudden jerk in starting had "frozen" the "fingers" of the controller, and

the last resort, the safety-plug, was jammed past his power to release it. He pulled at the brake frantically, and the wheel shuddered at his language. Beresford gathered Betty closer in his arms, and bent his face to hers.

"Light of my eyes," he said, "it was sudden, but it had to be."

"He'll stop and come back," said Betty, fearfully.

"He can't stop till he runs down," Beresford answered. "I didn't have time for more than one good kick, but I aimed it all I knew. It was the only thing to be done. I couldn't let you go—I hope you'll forgive me."

"Forgive you!" said Betty. "I think you're splendid. Put me down, Dick. I know it's wicked, but I've just got to laugh at dad."

"Will he forgive me, do you think?" Beresford asked.

"He'll have to," laughed Betty. "He'll love you for this when he calms down, but I shouldn't care to be near him when he steps out of that machine."

Far down the prairie road a small, red object raced madly with the wind. Between the reaches of yellow wheat, two impenitent young people stood and watched it.



AT TWO A.M.

PASSIONATE LOVER—What can I accomplish, whither shall I go, to please you?

GIRL—Oh, anywhere, only go soon!



POSSESSED A GOOD HEAD

HE—I understand that she is a girl who holds fast to her ideals.

SHE—Yes. She is far too sensible to marry one of them.

THE SONG OF A SLAVE

TO HER MASTER

WITHIN the courtyard, master mine,
 Give me one little fountain glad,
 To be for joy when I repine—
 The sister that I never had;

To play with me, when you are far—
 To chatter in my native tongue—
 Yours is a high and distant star,
 Dear master, I am young!

One little fountain ever gay,
 To sing the song of vanished birds,
 To break the silence of the day
 When you forget to love in words.

MARTHA GILBERT DICKINSON BIANCHI.



WHAT HE MUST COME TO

HE—I am free to confess that I have faults, Miss Alice, but——
 SHE—Yes, I know; but are you prepared to acknowledge that I have none?



WITH FAINT HEART

WITH ashen cheek and hollow eye,
 He lingered near her gate.
 I met him there, and said: "Old chap,
 You're looking ill of late."

He glanced up at her window,
 And said: "O friend of mine,
 I fear excessively that I'm
 Going in to a decline!"

CARROLL WATSON RANKIN.

A PAVILION ON THE SAND

By John Regnault Ellyson

"For those who roam, I have wrought a tapestry of life and hung it in the night, under the stars—as a pavilion I have set it upon the naked sand."

IN four days more, or certainly in five, at most, it was promised that we should be sitting at ease in the cafés of Cairo. And how exceedingly grateful we were—how gratifying the prospect! For a long while, indeed, the cafés of Cairo had seemed as far off as the gates of paradise.

In the main, there were tedious, prosaic marches, now by day and now by night, leagues on leagues of weedless, barren ground, the same ever-unvaried horizons, the same unchanging skies. At the halting places, it is true, the gabble and bustle of the attendants, the supervision of our effects, the meals fairly well prepared, the exchange of ideas with the more social among the travelers, served to break the monotony and to put us in a better humor for relishing the welcome hours of repose that followed.

If the obese merchant of Tanta was whimsical enough in his notions and the most clumsy individual in our small caravan, Melissus, the Greek, was assuredly the most nimble and sprightly, and none the less amusing. Slim and graceful, he had a fine head, black, curling hair, eyes very restless and keen, a wide mouth and a blunt nose. He was pleasant and quick-witted, free in his manner—rather familiar, in fact, and extremely voluble. I was decidedly prejudiced against him, at first, on account of his freedom and garrulousness, but, before our journey was over, and afterward,

especially at Cairo, I had sufficient reason for amending my judgment and for considering him a thoroughly sympathetic, genial and splendid fellow.

There was yet another, however, more interesting than he—the young Italian, Chivigni. I speak of him as an Italian, and so his name indicated. While looking at him and listening to his phrases, it was impossible to think otherwise, though I am by no means confident that such conclusions were correct. He had the refined features belonging to the best of that people, and spoke the language with the purity of a Tuscan. But something in his manner at times, something Oriental rather than Italian in his ideas and methods of thought, made me waver whenever I attempted to settle this point in my mind.

He was remarkably handsome—one of the handsomest men I ever met. His countenance was all frankness, all charm. His large, deep, earnest eyes were like a woman's; and like a woman's, too, was the smile that often played about his lips—haunting and seductive. He was not merely apt and intelligent; he was very scholarly. Young as he was, he had traveled much, and, with the spirit of a true observer, he had closely studied characteristics and customs. His experiences were given with vivid life and fancy that made his conversation always delightful. He conversed readily in many tongues. He was skilled in the art of being pleasing in himself and in the art of reconciling the differences of others and of bringing together persons of widely opposite temperament. He saw through the

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nature of Melissus at a glance, and discovered there the admirable qualities, the existence of which I latterly had the proof.

He was in delicate health when he joined us, and, during our long, rough journey, he did not improve. To his condition of ill-health—a condition even worse than we supposed—I attributed his fitful melancholy and his occasional moodiness. But, after brief periods of dull reserve and silence, he was more than ever affable and entertaining. All at once he seemed to gain what was lost but a moment before; color crept up through the bronze the sun had bestowed on his cheeks, and his eyes grew more alluring and brilliant.

Much of a favorite with all, he particularly won the sincere esteem of the merchant of Tanta, the Greek and myself.

We had continued moving on for several hours after sunset. The night was magnificent. The constellations twinkled. The moon rode high. The atmosphere was not only singularly pure, but singularly invigorating. The desert, unechoing and limitless, spread out like a vast field of silvery velvet. Under the charms of the night, I felt "indifferently good," as the old smoker of the East feels by the side of his enchanted pipe. I forgot what had so repeatedly been presented to my view—I forgot the gates of paradise, the cafés of Cairo. I gave myself over to the emotions drowsily excited, enjoying my impressions and listening to the clink and jingle of harness and tackle, the fall of the padded hoofs, the weird songs of the Arabs. Truly it was an incomparable night, a night full of uncommon magic, a night worthy of a drama of some sort, bright or somber.

And the drama evolved.

We had halted at the spot favorable for our usual resting hours. Before any preparations were made, however, it was discovered that something most serious had happened. Chivigni was missing.

To render matters more perplexing and painful, little could be gleaned.

His animal had strayed from the line and, when found, was uninjured. There might have been foul play, but there was no evidence of it. The Badawi, on whom all blame fell, could offer no explanation—he was hopelessly stupefied.

Melissus, with amazement and anguish in his countenance, brought the news to me, and each word struck the quick like a jagged sword. It must be confessed that I, too, was stupefied—confounded.

It was the Greek and the merchant of Tanta who, alive to the needs of the occasion, showed their wit and their discretion. It was they who acted with promptness. They opened their purses, and procured the service of the most alert among the Arabs. I hastened to join them as soon as I fully realized what was being done. We formed ourselves into a little body of active and keen-eyed searchers, no less eager than resolute.

Equipments ready and plans arranged, we immediately set out, and with all speed, along the route we had but lately covered.

II

MEANWHILE, Chivigni found himself crouched on the ground. He was instinctively moving, struggling to rise. He was fevered and dazed. Gray mist hung before him. He had received no injury—at least, he felt no pain. But he was very much enfeebled; it was with difficulty that he rose from the position in which he had fallen.

When he gained his feet, he tottered. His temples burned. He pressed his palms across his brow, concealed his eyes and then unveiled them.

The gray mist became a white blaze. Like one suddenly awakened, he looked upon the world about him as part of a dream. The clear air was chill, though no winds blew. The sky was filled with stars. The moon shed glittering light on the waste of blond sand. Everywhere the great sea of the desert glimmered, and silence brooded.

The whiteness of the glare was most cruel, and the stillness of the night was as a burden at once invisible and intolerable. Coldness crept over Chivigni, as he sought for the animal on which he had ridden, for tokens of moving life, for traces of his companions. Nothing indicated the passing of the caravan that way. He was seized with tremors. He crushed his face between his hands; he reeled.

After the first moment of despair, he would again have persuaded himself that he slumbered, that he dreamed. It was impossible—impossible as an attempt at divining how his misfortune had occurred. He could remember no detail, however trivial or vague. His brain, as if under the pressure of a drawn band, swayed and throbbed—fever had set confusion there. He could see only the gleaming horror of the solitude, and then this grew dim. His strength failed utterly; he sank down in a swoon.

For a time, he remained unconscious. By-and-bye, a kind of sensation stole over him—the indefinable sensation that precedes or breaks up repose. There was a sense of motion—the slow, continuous motion that soothes and tranquilizes. It was the feeling of one lying in some pendulous web rocked by shadows. Soft lights floated before his unclosed eyes, and at his ear fell sounds like echoes, spiritual and infinitely sweet.

Often he had wished, often devoutly desired that, when death came, the coming might be in such form as this—so slumberous, so gracious. It was the boon he craved, the boon for which he prayed. There was now no dread or pang or anguish. Regrets and sorrows and memories were things that had gone by. The world seemed a vast cloud that had been folded. There was a new dawn, and the sounds awakened were the sounds of dawn. In his soul he thanked God, and waited.

But soon he was aware of an object near where he lay, a presence ethereal or human—a distinctive presence like that of a bridal nymph or a fragrant girl. On his brow he felt the stroke

of a caressing hand—on his brow, on his cheek, on his lips he felt the touch of fingers that thrilled as they passed. The murmurs at his ear fashioned themselves into accents, and he listened to words mystical in meaning, yet naïve and delicious. They seemed scarcely spoken at all, but breathed into the air.

From the languor that was heavy upon him he roused himself. He opened his eyes, and beheld there at his side a creature of supreme loveliness, of strange grace. She was some rare child of the unknown, some daughter of the Orient clothed in a robe of dusky orange silk, girdled beneath the bosom with a woven scarf and bordered at its rim with jeweled threads. The warm-scented, loose waves of her dark hair, the flower of her face, the marvel of her melancholy eyes drew the blood through his veins, quickened the pulse of his heart.

He did not understand, nor did he seek to understand. His astonishment increased as he gazed, and rapture mingled with his sense of wonder. In the smiling features and in the splendor of her sad eyes, there was something profound and mysterious, something that haunted like remote, incomplete remembrance. At a time long since, somewhere in the earlier days of the past, he had caught glimpses of such beauty, but when these were first made manifest, or where or how, he could not tell.

He did not know, nor did he seek to know. But he knew and he understood now that he breathed, that the desert stretched about him, that he lay near a spring under the long shadow of a palm and that in the sky the moon yet lingered.

And he knew, too, that some one had come—one other than Death, though Death might be nigh—that one leaned over him with tenderness and solicitude and with love on her lips, and spoke, and that the tones of her voice went through his soul like the vibrations of a harp. He was charmed, lulled at once and stirred by the strangeness of her beauty, by the sound

of her voice, by the adorable passion of her words.

Slowly, murmuring the while in the manner of a mistress to her lover, she revived and gladdened and clung to him, brushed back the hair from his brow, passed her hand across his features and, bowing down, touched his lips with hers—warm lips more sweet and subtle and memorable than perfume or wine.

How all resembled the sorcery and the wildness of dreams, yet how palpable, how unmistakable, how real! The garments of the beautiful woman hung close about him; she had spoken; her lips had touched his; their hands had joined, and here by him were the unfathomable, dark, great eyes and the radiant face—here on the sanded plain, in the white luster from the sky, under the stars.

His spirits had kindled. As one breathes, he had gathered strength. There was no more weariness of limb, no more confusion of mind. Once, after he had risen, he thought he discerned dim forms in the distance, and heard calls of menace or warning, and once again, looking along the plain and listening, he could see beckoning shapes and hear calls that came louder. But he turned to his companion. She smiled, and took his hand, and even then the far noises died away, and the forms vanished.

"They have faded as the haze fades from a river."

"These are nothing," she said; "here we do not regard them."

"I give them no heed."

"Mere phantasms—they come and go. Sometimes they are fair, and sometimes they are sinister."

"I know there are strange things in strange lands——"

"And beings that are strange?" she asked, laughing.

"Beautiful, rare beings, whom we seek far and wide, and, finding, adore forever!"

"You are contented, but are you unwearied now?"

"I am happy—the beating of your heart has made me strong."

"Then we may go—come, let us not linger!"

"And are there paths in the pale sand?"

"Many unseen. This—this is the way, where love leads——"

"Where love follows love."

And they passed on in the calm of the night. The silence was broken only by their mingled voices. Their souls questioned and answered each other as cadences in song.

They passed on through the white night, and still beyond—into paths that bloomed, under the foliage of a grove, into grounds as seemly as those of a garden.

They passed on until they neared the entrance of a stately, elegant mansion. To the right, on a level space, stood three men, tall and sinewy. They were grooming their black dromedaries, and singing a plaintive chant.

"It would seem that they have traveled," he said.

"Yes; they bring us supplies from Cairo."

Through the portals of the abode they came into a lighted court, around which cool, clear waters flowed in the azure, tile-paved channel. On the steps of the interior doorway sat a slave whose shoulder leaned heavily against the jamb, and whose head drooped on his breast—an old man dead to the world.

"Drowsy old Selim!" she whispered; "he who was once so wakeful, sleeps now at every turn. Let us tiptoe by; in his slumbers he meets again his sweet master and his loved ones."

They ascended the steps softly. The wide hall, stored on either side with divers-colored objects of art, opened into an apartment lying at the foot of another small, marble staircase.

The chamber which they entered was superbly adorned, and faintly perfumed. The great beams of the ceiling were carved and gilded, and the walls, inlaid with mosaic as far as one might reach, glowed above with closely-woven symbols and imagery in hues of amber and sapphire. There were many doors exquisitely paneled, deep

casements and graceful arches, pendant, chiseled lamps of crystal and metal and stone, giant vases of lacquerware and bronze, and curious figures in jade on broad, black pedestals.

"Were you so much amazed?" she asked.

"I paused, but did I tremble?"

"You have seen these things before?"

"I have seen them elsewhere. The chamber, the figures in green jade—perhaps—"

"Ah, you remember!"

"No, I am not yet quite sure. I feel that I have been leagues away—that I am here now with you alone, and that your dear soul is mine."

She smiled, and led him by the hand into an unveiled corner of the chamber—a beautiful alcove. The low couch near the wall was fair with silken trappings, and in front of the couch had been placed a little table of ebony filled with salvers of fresh fruit and flagons of wine.

There they sat and regaled themselves, and talked together in the noble language of their childhood. He told of his wayfarings through the world, of his ideals and his hopes, of love sought and of love found. She told of the prince, her father, who, enamoured of solitude, brought here his idols and treasures, of the land from which they parted, of early and vivid memories, of love she awaited and of love that came.

Time went by stealthily. Outside, the Eastern sky flushed and the sun arose; within, the lamps paled before the first light of the morning.

"Look," she whispered, "the stars are gone and day is here!"

"Yes, I see, but I cannot tell why this so grieves me."

She caressed and cheered him and, taking up a flagon, poured therefrom some odorous cordial into a goblet which, after touching with her lips, she pressed to his. He drank.

"You have outwatched the night," she murmured, "and sleep is now your due—the balm of sleep that heals—the sleep of the inner fountains of the sea!"

The fumes of the draught mounted to his brain, and almost immediately he sank in the arms of his companion, among the pillows of the couch, seized with unconquerable languor.

For a long, long while, no sound reached him. No word or movement troubled or broke the calm—no turbulence of thought or of desire.

But, as the day lengthened and evening drew near, he became less tranquil. He moved, and sighed. He felt as if he were again on the barren plain, alone, abandoned; and yet, suddenly, he thought he heard pilgrims in the distance—priests or pilgrims intoning these syllables of an old Arab chant:

"For those who roam, I have wrought a tapestry of life and hung it in the night, under the stars—as a pavilion I have set it upon the naked sand."

It was then that he was aroused. He was still in the chamber—the chamber of his beloved, but she was not there. He bent his ear, and listened for the footfalls, for the voice of his companion—the sister of his soul.

In the apartment nothing had suffered change. He lay in a position in which he could see well-nigh every recess, every object. He recognized the articles, the ornaments. And through the open casement, he saw the slender, dark shafts of palm-trees and, between them and beyond, the gleaming surface of the level sand and the sun, like a round, barred shield of red flame, dipping behind the rim of the horizon.

In the brief twilight, the shadows of night stole quickly abroad. But no one came. He still listened, and it seemed incredible that no sound or voice or footfall could be heard. He wondered and breathed fitfully, and doubts of one kind and another arose, and unknown fears.

The fantastic lamps that had been burning in the chamber unheeded since morning now shed a mystery of light over the surroundings. The light, however, was neither more brilliant nor less nebulous. But the objects everywhere—the silken trappings of the couch on which he lay, the many, paneled doors, the giant vases, the idols

on the black pedestals, the coloring of the high walls and the carved and gilded beams of the ceiling—all bore a very unusual and very unreal appearance.

The profound silence, at length, grew ominous. He became conscious of a sense of loneliness, of isolation. He became more and more deeply agitated. He became oppressed with feelings of cruel alarm. Something that he had been considering for several moments, also, served to increase his ill-forebodings—a circumstance for which he could not intelligently account.

The section of the apartment—the whole of the wall, which was just in front of him and which the lamplight but feebly illumed, resembled the tarnished drop-scene of some theatre, or the encrusted tissue of its curtain. This wall or curtain appeared to be outwardly played upon by the sweep of noiseless wind. It vibrated slowly at intervals. The motion of it rocked his brain as does the motion of the sea. He could not rise, and so, with eyes fixed there and with hands thrust against his temples, he remained inactive.

In gazing constantly at the same point, he soon discovered that the dull-hued drapery grew less opaque and more vapory in character. Indeed, by straining his eyes, he could see objects through the quivering veil—distant objects that, moment after moment, became more and more clearly visible. He could see the moon's reflected luster, the keen stars; the remote, low, black, mystical horizon and intervening spaces of glittering sand.

Terrible thoughts beset him. In vain he renewed his effort—he could scarcely stir. The weight was yet upon his limbs, though at last he succeeded in raising the forepart of his body. He looked about him.

The same singular appearance was

everywhere observable. Some marvelous change was being effected—he knew not why or by what means. The entire fabric was resolving itself into air, and vanishing like the caprice of a night, like a pavilion builded by enchantment. The roof and the walls parted; things of rare beauty shifted here and there like shadows; the shadows melted like clouds, and the yellowish lamp-glow merged into white moonlight.

And then, outstretched and alone, Chivigni realized that he lay near a spring by the side of a palm under the stars.

III

It was here we found him, after a three hours' rigorous search admirably well planned and untiringly pursued. All traces of delirium were gone, and the fever had abated, but he was almost in a dying state. We gave him what ease we could, kneeling at his side. We bathed his face and moistened his lips with wine. We sought to warm his chilled veins, to revive his flickering pulse, and we succeeded in a measure for a time.

We questioned him, and his replies extremely embarrassed us. The story he told is the fantasy which I have dared to reproduce in an outline of my own, but largely in his phrases and turns of expression. He spoke as one speaks after a long swoon—very faintly, very slowly, frequently pausing; but he spoke clearly, with earnestness, and now and then with a sudden spiritual fervor. When he ceased speaking, he was visibly weaker. He closed his eyes, and we saw that the end was nigh.

Once again, and once only, he looked up and smiled and touched my hand, and then he died—died uttering strange words I could not comprehend, some few, sweet, wild, passionate words in an unknown tongue.



PLANS AND SPECIFICATIONS

By Draper Williamson

“HELLO! Is that 1732-A? Is this Mr. Draughton, the architect? . . . Mr. Draughton, this is Mrs. Rattlington Smith. . . . No, Mrs. Rattlington Smith—no, S-m-i-t-h. Yes. Mr. Draughton, Mr. Smith and I have just bought a lot, and are thinking of putting up a very modest little cottage, and could you come out here and talk it over with us? You know we want it just exactly like this house—What did you say? Why, 2031 Roosevelt avenue; it's our sister's house—Mrs. Singularton. . . . Yes; when would it suit you? . . . Yes, indeed, that suits us exactly—No, not through. And—oh, very well. Good-bye, Mr. Draughton.”

II

“Good evening, Mr. Draughton. So very kind of you to come all the way out, but indeed I could never have explained what we wanted unless I had this house to show you; I'm so stupid, I never can understand anything about a plan; it looks just like a design for a Persian rug or something new to me. Now, we want something old Colonial, just exactly like this house, and the same size, except that we would like one more story. . . . How wide is our lot? Twenty feet, three inches. . . . This house? Yes, this house is sixty feet—isn't it, John?—and we want ten great big columns in front—this has only six; and then we want a great big hall when you go in, with one of those dear, old-timey fireplaces that you can sit in one corner of, and noble high ceil-

ings— Oh, no, this hall isn't *half* big enough; I think it just *spoils* a house to have such a teeny, tiny hall. And then—just wait a minute—here it is—we want a dear, old, low dining-room, with great beams and bay-windows on all sides, like this. Yes, I cut it out of the *Woman's Weekly*. I think it's from a log cabin on Monkamunk Lake. And then we want a parlor like this photograph; isn't it a dear? Yes, it is from one of those old Italian palaces; but I never can remember which. Then, my husband's den; you know the rathskeller at The Silverstein? . . . Oh, *did* you? Then let me tell you how beautifully I think you did it—so rough and old looking; I always expect to see Columbus or William the Conqueror or somebody like them, sitting at those tables; everything seems a hundred years old. Well, my husband's den must be exactly like that. Then I want a dear little reception-room. That little gold chair, isn't it dear? It's one of my wedding presents, and I want my reception-room just in that style; but I want everything harmonious; not like the row of rooms at Johnnamakers's Upholstery Department, to show off the different styles. . . . No, I think the kitchen and the pantry are just right, except that I want my kitchen twice as large; and I want a laundry, and a bigger servants' porch, and I want the kitchen to be cooler than this one. . . . Oh, don't you think so? Well, if you can't—but you will try, won't you? And then up-stairs; here are some bedrooms that I cut out of *The Cottage Comfortable*; aren't they just dear? Such a cute little fireplace, and

such a darling old four-poster bedstead. And aren't those little windows just too sweet for anything? I think that's all.

"Oh, I nearly forgot; we have just five thousand dollars to put in the house, and not one penny more, so you must keep it down that low. . . . Well, all right. . . . Oh, dreadful! I thought, of course, you could have the plans by to-morrow evening! Couldn't you get them done sooner, somehow? . . . Well, if you can't—but, you know, we're in a dreadful hurry. Good evening!"

III

"Is Mr. Draughton in? . . . Yes, we've come to bother you, Mr. Draughton. We got the plans, and we think they are just dear—that cute little shield you put up in one corner of the plans is too sweet for anything. But, oh, I'm so stupid, I can't understand them at all! I don't like the stairs here. . . . A fireplace! Do you know, I thought that was the front stairway! And what's this next the kitchen? . . . Why, I thought it was the kitchen, all the time! So stupid of me! The front looks different from my sister's house, somehow. . . . That's true, I didn't think about our lot being so much narrower. Now, we want this bedroom out here, and this bath-room so, and—but here are three sheets of things we want different, or something. . . . What! twelve thousand dollars! Oh, Mr. Draughton, you must cut it down! We couldn't possibly spend over five thousand. . . . No, we can't spare any of those rooms. We want it just like that, but you must cut it down somehow. Well, *please* try to. Oh, thank you. Good-bye!"

IV

"Good morning, Mr. Draughton. . . . Yes, but don't you know, we saw such a darling house yesterday at Flintcote. Yes, that's it; and we think we like it just a weeny better than sis-

ter's. Oh, if you could make us another sketch, we'd be so— That's true, the house is on a great big farm, and our lot so narrow. Well, you'll do the best you can, won't you? Good-bye!"

V

2031 ROOSEVELT AVENUE.

DEAR MR. DRAUGHTON:

We think the new plans are just too cute for anything; but I saw this sweet little picture of a house in *The Circulator*, yesterday. It's the house where Tinkler used to send for butter when he was writing "Dinner-bell Ditties," and if you only just *could* make us another sketch, we would be *so* much obliged to you; and could you let us have it right soon?

Most sincerely,

BLANCHE BELHAM SMITH.

TUESDAY, JULY FOURTEENTH.

VI

2031 ROOSEVELT AVENUE.

DEAR MR. DRAUGHTON:

We like the last plans so much. The house looks so low and quaint and Dutchy; but couldn't you put that porch that we had on the first house on this?—the one with the high Colonial columns, so stiff and imposing, you know? And can't we have it to-morrow, to show our cousin-in-law, who will be with us then?

Hastily,

BLANCHE BELHAM SMITH.

MONDAY, JULY TWENTIETH.

VII

"Is Mr. Draughton? Oh, good morning, Mr. Draughton. . . . No, I just want to ask you one or two things, and it won't take me a second. My cousin-in-law says she wouldn't have a three-story house for anything, so couldn't you just work in those third-story rooms somewhere else? You know the Cottagehams' have wings on each side; couldn't we do—? Yes, that's true, they have all the land they want, and we have only that

miserable twenty feet. Are you sure there's no other way? . . . Why, she didn't like it because a three-story house always looks like a young ladies' boarding-school. . . . No, no one else said it. . . . Well, that's true, it's ours, not hers. I'm afraid you think I've been awfully silly, Mr. Draughton. Good afternoon!"

VIII

2031 ROOSEVELT AVENUE.

DEAR MR. DRAUGHTON:

We think the first plans are the best, after all. So won't you please fix the specifications, and everything, and get bids just as soon as you possibly can? We want to give a Christmas house-party in the new house, and have already sent out the invitations.

Most sincerely,

BLANCHE BELHAM SMITH.

THURSDAY, AUGUST SIXTH.

IX

THE CAT-TAIL INN,
MALARIA LAKE, MAINE.

DEAR MR. DRAUGHTON:

Those bids are simply *awful*! The lowest was twelve thousand dollars and sixteen cents; and you *know* we told you not to make it cost over five thousand. You must just make some new plans, and cut everything *right down* and get some other bids; and please do it *right away*—we are in such a hurry.

Hastily,

BLANCHE BELHAM SMITH.

AUGUST FIFTEENTH.

X

THE WESTERN UNION TELEGRAPH
COMPANY.

DATED Malaria Lake, Maine,

8—31—1903.

To George Post Draughton,
3307 Greenback Bldg.,

New Amsterdam, N. Y.

New bids received. Award contract lowest bidder old bids immediately.

T. RATTINGTON SMITH.

XI

"Is this 1732-A? Mr. Draughton, that contractor is delaying dreadfully; he hasn't a single man at— Oh, Labor Day? How absurd! So annoying. Good-bye!"

XII

"WHY, good morning, Mr. Draughton. . . . Yes, isn't it? Mr. Draughton, I'm so glad I happened to see you, for I want to ask you about this kitchen. . . . Oh, I'm so afraid of ladders. No, indeed, you go up first. Oh, please do! Oh, I—no, don't touch me! Oh, those horrid workmen, I wish they wouldn't look! There! I'll never come up a ladder again. . . . The kitchen? What kitchen? Oh, yes! Why, it's entirely too big; I'll feel as if I were in a church or a theatre. . . . Yes, of course I said twice as big, but certainly I didn't mean a thousand miles. Oh, Mr. Draughton, it must be more than that! . . . Is it? Well, then I'm sure that man's tape-measure is wrong or something—it just can't be— Why, it spoils the whole house! I wish you had made it smaller. . . . No, I suppose there's nothing to do now, but it's just horrid. Good-bye."

XIII

2031 ROOSEVELT AVENUE.

DEAR MR. DRAUGHTON:

The carpenter hasn't put any wooden floor in the cellar, and says he won't unless we pay him extra, because it isn't in the specifications. It's just too provoking! I thought of *course* you had put that in; my sister has one in her cellar, and you know I said we wanted the house *exactly* like hers. The whole house is just a botch; there's hardly a *single thing* in it the way I wanted it, and I just *know* it won't be finished in time for the house-party, and I don't know what to do.

Sincerely,

BLANCHE BELHAM SMITH.

FRIDAY, DECEMBER EIGHTEENTH.

XIV

1616 SAMPSON PLACE.

MY DEAR MR. DRAUGHTON:

Can't you make one of our house-party, to-morrow, in our new home? We think the house is just a dear, and all our friends say it is the sweetest

thing they ever saw, and there isn't a single thing that we would have any different. I hope *so much* nothing will prevent your being with us.

Most sincerely,
BLANCHE BELHAM SMITH.

DECEMBER TWENTY-FOURTH.



ENSHRINED

"FOR that I may not wear my rose
Full-cherished on my breast,
I leave my rose upon the stalk,
At honor's high behest.

"For that I may not show my pearl
In orbèd moonlight fire,
I leave it gleaming, fair and far,
Unflawed by my desire.

"For that, through ban of cynic Fate,
My love may not be mine
In face of day, I go away,
And leave my saint in shrine."

Thus spake her love ere that he went;
The loved one bent her head,
And, shivering, "A shrine is cold
And desolate," she said.

MARTHA McCULLOCH-WILLIAMS.



TOO MUCH TO EXPECT

FRIEND—I suppose parents should try to be companions to their children.
THE OLD MAN—Yes, but I could never go out every night with Jack, and come home at three in the morning.

LE GANT

Par Albert Boissière

QU'ON imagine, sur un corps maigre et tassé, une petite tête ridée et fûtée, avec des envollements de cheveux blancs gracieusement disposés et l'éclair malicieux de deux yeux restés très vifs; qu'on accorde à ce visage, sans l'illusion des fards minutieux et le pernecieux mensonge d'une poudre de riz sans cesse renouvelée, un reste de fraîcheur déconcertante; qu'on donne à la personne ainsi imaginée une tournure presque alerte et comme en désaccord avec l'apparent outrage des ans: qu'on termine la restauration du chef-d'œuvre par des mains demeurées d'un galbe charmant, si remuantes et si éloquentes, et aussi par deux pieds incomparablement menus, toujours en mouvement sous la robe de soie puce, par vanité de se savoir menus autant que par orgueil de se juger incomparables; qu'on anime d'une voix frêle et spirituelle, et parfois, dirait-on, ironique, le personnage vieillot avec grâce et si charmant de ton passé: et l'on aura, dans sa ligne d'ensemble, le portrait à peu près véridique de la vieille demoiselle de Ressencourt que la jeune Mme de Morsanes appelait, avec une affection vraiment filiale, tante Bérénice.

Et, de fait, tante Bérénice méritait, jusqu'à l'excès, les prévenances dont on l'entourait; l'image classique de la vieille fille, acariâtre et pourvue de toutes les manies puérides ou insupportables, qu'on a accoutumé de propager, n'était point l'image qu'elle reflétait... Elle ne manifestait jamais nul regret de sa vie grise—probablement parce qu'elle l'avait choisie ainsi, elle-même, et que les circonstances ne la lui

avaient point imposée... Parce qu'elle n'avait jamais supporté le poids d'une grande peine ni le faix aussi lourd d'une trop grande joie, elle était d'un caractère égal et enjoué. Elle savait beaucoup plus de choses sur la vie qu'elle n'en voulait dire, et, lorsqu'il lui plaisait de causer de la vie, elle en causait avec beaucoup d'esprit, car elle n'était point prude et avait le trait rapide.

Dans le salon de Mme de Morsanes—pour Mme de Morsanes, restée toute jeune orpheline, la vieille fille, uniquement dévouée à l'éducation de sa nièce, avait été la vraie mère...—tante Bérénice semblait un portrait de famille descendu de son cadre pour sourire de plus près à la curiosité amicale des familiers. Et les familiers prenaient plaisir à ce sourire qu'elle avait conservé très doux et qui était comme le complément de son geste resté gracieux et menu, ou de sa conversation demeurée prime-sautière—car elle n'avait point sa pareille, lorsqu'elle voulait s'en donner la peine, pour renvoyer le mot ou, d'une chiquenaude spirituelle, refermer sa bonbonnière...

Ce soir-là, dans le salon de Mme de Morsanes, on causait entre intimes... Légère, papillotante, qu'elle effleurât le potin de la veille ou qu'elle décorât l'actualité d'un tour vif, la causerie virevoltait, imprévue, sautillant d'un sujet à l'autre, avec une désinvolture capricieuse... Mais, par des détours inopinés, c'était toujours, naturellement, entre jeunes hommes et jeunes femmes, vers le même point de conjonction qu'elle revenait, et c'est au côté sentimental et amoureux

du potin ou de l'actualité qu'elle s'arrêtait, sinon avec le plus de persistance, avec, du moins, le plus d'intérêt... Et l'intérêt que prenait tante Bérénice à la causerie n'était pas moins soutenu que celui où les jeunes hommes s'appliquaient... Pour alimenter la conversation, l'ordre du jour enregistre toujours assez de scandales, et pour juger du scandale il se trouve toujours dans un salon, entre intimes, des gens portés à la plus extrême sévérité et d'autres gens, par antithèse, enclins aux excuses bienveillantes... Tante Bérénice, ce soir-là, avec son même sourire de portrait accueillant, écoutait le jugement sévère des uns et s'attentionnait aux arguments pleins d'atténuations qu'émettaient les autres; mais, à une certaine nuance de ce sourire, il était visible qu'elle se rangeait du côté de ceux-ci... Et elle formula, du fond de son fauteuil, avec sa petite voix grêle de cristal, la morale de ces papotages...

— Mes enfants, dit-elle, lorsqu'il s'agit de juger les sentiments qui font agir les autres... l'indulgence est la plus clairvoyante des vertus.

... Et comme Mme de Morsanes lui tendait, en souriant, sa tasse de guimauve, la petite vieille demoiselle de Ressencourt ajouta, avec un clin d'œil malicieux:

— Oui, oui, ma chérie; je sais bien ce que tu penses... Je te fais l'effet d'un aveugle qui voudrait discuter peinture ou d'un sourd qui se mêlerait de donner son avis sur Bach!...

— Le tour est charmant pour amener l'anecdote, dit Mme de Morsanes.

— Mais je n'ai point d'anecdote à conter, se récria la vieille demoiselle de Ressencourt, en toussetant, après la première gorgée de guimauve. Et elle ajouta, d'un ton guilleret, au milieu du silence déférent et curieux qui l'environnait... "Je suis une vieille fée... d'accord, ma mignonne; mais je suis une vieille fée qui n'a jamais fait de miracles, comme la princesse de féerie qui vous occupe et son diable de précepteur qui ne vous regarde pas." Les jeunes gens, portés à l'indulgence,

remerciaient déjà des yeux la petite vieille de sa boutade... "D'ailleurs, continua-t-elle, avec le même enjouement... il est bon de dire que je n'ai jamais eu de précepteur."

— Oh! ma tante! insinua Mme de Morsanes.

— Petite, tu t'effarouches inutilement! reprit tante Bérénice. Ce n'est pas une anecdote... c'est un souvenir... un souvenir d'enfance qui me revient à l'esprit.

— Dites! pria maintenant Mme de Morsanes. Votre mémoire est si fidèle!

— Heu! mon enfant, répliqua la vieille demoiselle avec une douce lassitude, ma mémoire est d'autant meilleure que ma vie est peu meublée. Je me rappelle, en effet, les moindres traits de notre existence, les plus minces détails de ma plus tendre enfance... Je vois même, comme s'ils étaient là, devant moi, les figurants de notre vie quotidienne... la bonne, une grosse fille de Bayeux, qui portait agréablement le costume du pays, avec la coiffe plate en lingerie, sur le serre-tête de velours noir... et qu'on appelait Berthe... et le chien de garde qui répondait au nom de César et dont la niche était à droite de la porte du jardin... sous un gros coudrier. Car ton grand-père était alors conseiller à la cour de Caen, ville plate, grise et ennuyeuse. J'avais dix ans... ta mère en avait huit et l'on nous avait donné la même institutrice.

Penchant sa tête flûtée, dans un enroulement des cheveux blancs, tante Bérénice donna une tape amicale sur la joue de sa nièce...

— Tu vois bien, ma chérie, que tu n'avais pas à t'effaroucher inutilement.

Puis, se réadressant à la compagnie:

— Mon institutrice, poursuivait-elle, était une vieille Anglaise, installée depuis longtemps dans la ville. Sorte de machine à devoirs, Miss Ketty passait pour une personne un peu déséquilibrée. Mais, dans une ville grise, plate et ennuyeuse... on ne choisit pas son précepteur; on le subit... Elle avait connu, affirmait-on, "en tout bien, tout honneur," lord Brummel, échoué

misérablement dans le faubourg de Vaucelles... et c'était en elle, avec son amour immodéré du gin et son observance scrupuleuse de la Bible, un culte soigneusement entretenu. Ce culte était une risée pour mon père qui la plaisantait. Miss Ketty n'entendait pas le plaisanterie. Elle gardait, affirmait-on encore — mais personne au monde ne s'en était assuré — comme une relique précieuse, sous globe, vous m'entendez, mes enfants?... un gant en peau de daim du célèbre dandy... Et ce gant était la tarte à la crème des taquineries dont on l'assaillait.. Miss Ketty méprisait les taquineries. Et si puissante en elle était sa religion du souvenir, que lorsqu'elle voulait m'encourager au travail — ma paresse était notoire et nous n'en étions encore qu'à la "première conjugaison" — elle me disait, avec gravité et aussi beaucoup d'émotion dans la voix :

— Mademoiselle... si vous conjuguez sans faute le verbe "aimer," je ferai

voir à vous le gant du célèbre lord Brummel.

La vieille demoiselle de Ressencourt se prit à tousser, en cet endroit de son récit... Attentif, l'auditoire restait en suspens, cependant que Mme de Mor-sanes lui souriait avec tendresse... Mais, soit que la toux, malgré deux ou trois gorgées de guimauve, l'empêchât de suivre le fil de son anecdote — soit qu'à la vérité elle n'eût point d'anecdote à conter, ainsi qu'elle l'avait préalablement assuré — soit encore que l'évocation de ce souvenir, dans sa vie si peu meublée, valût toutes les anecdotes plaisantes — tante Bérénice reposa sa tasse sur le guéridon et, avec une naïveté parfaite, si parfaite qu'elle frisait la plus délicieuse malice, elle termina, de sa petite voix de cristal fêlé... si usée... et qu'on disait, parfois, ironique :

— Eh bien ! mes amis ! je n'ai jamais vu, de ma vie, le gant en peau de daim du grand homme.



"JUST LIKE A WOMAN"

SHE was most fair, of beauty rare,
But, oh, her heart was lead.
I praised her charms, her graceful arms,
The poisoning of her head.
She was my gem, my diadem,
My rose without a thorn;
But though I praised, she coldly gazed,
And answered me with scorn.

But, when I made a great tirade
About her dearest friend,
And swore her face was commonplace,
She heard me to the end.
She vowed 'twas true, then tender grew,
And, with a grateful air,
Her head she pressed against my breast,
And loved me then and there.

ARTHUR MACY.

UNGUARDED GATES

A COMMON day, and a day of fret
 To trouble her heart to vain defying,
 As she leaned to the bitter-cold pane, and let
 Her sad eyes follow the long lane, lying
 Out to the end of the dim day, dying
 In uttermost distance, cold and thin,
 Where a broken wind went suddenly sighing:
But this was the day when Love came in.

A day of useless and vague regret,
 Of saddening earth with the sad sky vying,
 Which most should teach her not to forget,
 Which most should bring the revivifying
 Of other Winters that rose, undying,
 And broke her heart that they once had been,
 With old winds wailing, and cold lips crying:
But this was the day when Love came in.

With heart of longing, and eyes unwet
 Because of other eyes, swift espying,
 She turned from the bitter-cold pane, and met
 Scrawled words—too suddenly sweet for trying
 To sadden them by a vain denying
 Of the hovering Hope that waited to win,
 With white wings barely held down from flying:
But this was the day when Love came in.

ENVOY

He, dreaming, waits for her late replying,
 Her heart confesses its subtlest kin—
 Though never Time bring their lives' allying:
Yet sweet was the day when Love came in.

FANNY KEMBLE JOHNSON.



AN UNEXPECTED DELAY

MRS. LAKESIDE—She married in haste.
 MRS. LA SALLE—And repented at leisure?
 "It seems so. She was fully a year in getting her divorce."

HIS CROWDED HOUR

By Bertha Runkle

“**M**ARY, here's a friend of mine. My sister, Mr. Gay.”

Miss Mary Carter turned her attention from the hackneys in the ring to the young man at her brother's side. A faint, lovely flush sprang to her face; a smile, that began in a lightening of the eyes, flitted to the curving corners of her mouth, to the dimples in her cheeks. Yet Mr. Gay was no long-lost lover. Miss Carter had exactly the same tremble of color, exactly the same smile, for the maid who woke her in the morning, for the family, cross at breakfast, for Lord Oldport, who was believed to have left his tight little island for her sake. It was just Mary's way.

Ted Carter strode off. Mary leaned her chinchilla muff on the rail of the box, a laugh in her eyes.

“Evidently, we're ordered to talk to each other.”

The man in the aisle below laughed back for sheer content.

“I hope you don't mind, Miss Carter. I'm very glad your brother's gone, but, honestly, I didn't tell him to go.”

Gracefully, without seeming to stare, Miss Carter had taken a thorough inventory of her interlocutor's appearance. “He's not so good-looking—” she made rapid notes—“not so good-looking as he seems. But he's so radiant—as if he were a daytime fire-fly.”

“But you're not one of the college fellows?” she thought aloud.

“Do I seem as young as that?” he asked, with laughing ruefulness. “I

met Ted abroad last Summer, and we came home together.”

“Oh, now I know! Ted's spoken of you, often. You're the man with the name!”

“The name?”

“Peregrine, isn't it?”

“It means a wanderer, doesn't it?”

“And are you?”

“By no means,” Mr. Peregrine Gay answered, gravely. “I've spent all my days in Jersey City, where my father conducts a glue industry.”

She looked at him now with real interest, though it was scarcely to be distinguished from her pretty and polite feigning. She did not remember ever having met a soul from Jersey City. Though so near, to her it was a very Nazareth. Could anything good come out of Jersey City—anything so well-dressed, well-spoken, well-looking as Mr. Peregrine Gay? He was distinctly good-looking, and, somehow, different. She leaned forward half an inch.

“If you were what your name says, I should ask you to relate your adventures.”

“To tell the history of my life? It's had no history—till to-day.”

“Oh—you're exhibiting?”

“I'm making an exhibition of myself, I suppose,” he owned, with a laugh. “Miss Carter, may I tell you a story?”

Her eyes answered.

“Once upon a time——”

“So long ago as that?”

“I thought it would sound more romantic to put it that way. But I can be as definite as you please. On

the sixteenth of last February, about twenty-five minutes after ten in the evening, a fellow was walking up Fifth avenue——"

"A fellow? But I thought this was to be romantic. Please make him a prince."

"I wish I could. But he *was* rather romantic, whatever we call him. Well, he was walking up Fifth avenue, when he found his way blocked by——"

"A great, scaly, green dragon?"

"No, he didn't get near enough to the princess, to encounter her dragon. His obstacle was a red-and-yellow awning. There was a dance going on at the other end of that awning, and he would have liked to go to it, but he couldn't, because he wasn't invited. So he stood a while among the policemen and loafers and shop-girls and rowdies that were watching the rich and great pass in. He was in disguise, of course, so that none of the crowd suspected he was a prince—nor did any one else, for that matter. Well, he stared at everybody—he didn't think much of the men, though—and he saw so many pretty girls in so many pretty cloaks that he was quite bewildered, and couldn't tell at all which one to choose, when suddenly—the princess came!

"Her cloak was white, and, of course, it was trimmed with ermine, but it didn't need that royal fur to tell him she was a true princess. She paused one minute by the opening of the awning, and met his eye and smiled."

"Mr. Gay, I didn't!" Miss Carter cried, and blushed for her own vehemence. "At least—you're describing my cloak."

"The princess smiled," Mr. Gay continued, tranquilly, "on the prince, and on two pasty little girls and a very dirty messenger-boy who were peering in at the arch of the awning. You didn't see them as individuals—they were just the populace, and, like a gracious sovereign lady, you smiled. You wouldn't have remembered one of them five minutes later—or eight months."

"I think you most polite to remember."

"Ah, you haven't heard all the tale," he cried, in his quick way, at once impetuous and shy. He was a little fearful, a little embarrassed, yet obviously enjoying himself very much. "I must tell you that the prince was so dazed by this lovely apparition that he hadn't the presence of mind to say to the man at the door that he was a reporter and demand of him the name of the lady in the white cloak. Instead, he walked away in a radiant dream, and it wasn't till next day that he asked himself how he was ever to see the princess again. You see, when one lives in Jersey City, and one's father makes glue, one's acquaintance doesn't number a single person who moves in royal circles. So he began to haunt the awnings, and the theatres, and the restaurants, till, at length, one Sunday afternoon, he saw her driving down the Avenue. By this time, he was perfectly desperate, so he ran after the carriage——"

Miss Carter opened her eyes.

"—on the sacred Avenue. Fortunately, there were, as usual, twice as many vehicles as the street had proper room for, the princess couldn't go very fast, and the prince could keep up without being thought a lunatic—though he was thought a boor, for he butted into, and trod on, perfectly inoffensive people from the Park to Murray Hill, where the princess dismissed her carriage. Then, after the door had swallowed her up, he rang the bell, and asked if Mr. Jones lived there. The man said, 'No, it was Mr. Seton Carter's house.'

"So then the prince knew who you were, and for the pure pleasure of seeing your name, he used to read the society-column just as if he belonged behind the ribbon-counter. While the opera lasted, he discovered that he could see you every Friday night, and he did. Then you went South and he lost you, and he despaired, when at last, one Spring day, the papers announced your approaching departure for England, on the *Paris*. He took passage on the *Paris*, being ingenious enough to hope to meet you on the

voyage. But you traveled with royal exclusiveness, and never even glanced his way. Later, when he was staying at Claridge's, where he had arranged to sit at the next table——"

"At Claridge's?"

"Oh, my princess is a real princess—she never notices commoners. If her glance did chance to fall on the young man at the next table, she looked straight at him as if he weren't there, and his features were no more alive to her than the pattern of the wall-paper. Ah, don't think me criticizing—I'm praising. I want my princesses to be real princesses! If they can't, in this twentieth century, go round with lovely gold crowns on their heads, let them at least give me the pleasure of a royal air. Ah, you think I'm talking nonsense. I mean it, I assure you."

"What else happened at Claridge's?" she asked, with prim mouth and smiling eyes.

"He heard the royal family discussing the plans of the princess's brother, who had been intending a trip through Norway with a college chum. Chum hadn't turned up; brother decided to go alone. Then behold the wily prince taking the same steamer to Bergen; behold him becoming acquainted, becoming even intimate; returning to New York in the same cabin with brother. Behold him here."

They scanned each other, silently, gravely. Then the man smiled.

"Well?"

"I think," said the princess, "you should be presented to the queen-mother."

"I don't know how you manage it," Miss Carter said, thoughtfully, handing Peregrine Gay his tea. It was a snowy January Sunday, very pleasant by the drawing-room fire. Also, for a miracle, Mary was alone.

"Manage what?"

"Always to look so contented."

"But I feel so. Contented? I'm going to purr in another minute."

"I believe you are." The girl

laughed. "But I didn't mean at this moment, when you're enjoying—your tea. You *always* look as if you didn't know what it is to be bored."

"I don't—now."

"Haven't you a care in the world?"

He appeared to consider, carefully.

"Not that I remember, highness."

"Isn't there a single thing that worries you?"

"Not one single blessed thing!"

She leaned back in her chair behind the tea-table to survey him in smiling wonder.

"I believe it's true," she said, softly, half to herself. "It can't be true, but I believe it is."

"What surprises you, princess? Isn't everybody always happy in your glittering world?"

"Do you think they are? Don't you ever see them look bored?"

"Oh, yes, but I thought that was part of the game," he answered. "I thought it was Rule Forty-two that they must look bored at the opera and driving in the Park. You can't mean they really are bored?"

"I'm afraid they are."

Mr. Gay looked for an instant almost grave.

"What a blow to my illusions—if I believed it for one moment! But I know, princess, you're trying to impose upon me."

Her only answer was a little impatient sigh.

He sat beaming upon her, till, presently, in her silence, there came—against his will, as it seemed—something of seriousness to his merry eyes, hesitation to his tongue.

"Princess, it can't be that you have anything to trouble you?"

She became interested in the flame of the spirit-lamp.

"Oh, perhaps—one or two trifles."

"I don't see how you can," he answered, with conviction; "I don't see how you can."

"Oh, I'm mortal."

"Because," he went on, "to know how perfectly lovely you are must make you perfectly happy."

She did not look up, or speak. After a moment, he went on:

"I wouldn't for the world seem personal, but I do think you absolutely lovely. Your face, and your voice, and your hands, and your soft clothes that one wants to stroke, and your manner, so gracious and kind to every one—you know what people call you, 'the polite girl'—and your wonderful temper, never ruffled, always patient with bores like myself."

"Do you think me perfect?" she asked, still with bent head.

"I thought you that when first I saw you under the awning. But I knew you were—mortal, as you say. I was sometimes afraid, those months of waiting, that, when I knew you, I might find you not perfect. But you are. So that's why I brazenly avow that I'm perfectly happy."

Indeed, he appeared so, but Miss Carter would not look at him to acknowledge it. In a voice a little hard and abrupt, she said:

"One of my worries is Lord Oldport. Mother says he won't wait much longer."

Mr. Gay started. She glanced up quickly.

"Ah, you think it bad taste to refer to that."

"No, before the court fool one discusses everything," he answered; and, after a pause, "princess, if you permit Touchstone's opinion, I think, of course, you will marry Oldport."

She was watching him now, but her face was well-schooled, impossible to read.

"He's not your equal, but then no man on the round earth is that. This man is almost your equal in rank; he's a gentleman, wears an honorable name honorably, has political ambitions highly creditable to him and likely to bring him to a high place. In confidence, princess, you're thrown away in New York."

"And he's so pleasant and chatty!" the girl said.

Mr. Peregrine Gay chose to laugh.

"But that's quite the right line for

him. If I were an earl, I wouldn't talk, either."

"That seems unlikely."

"You think me garrulous? I dare say I am," the young man admitted, cheerfully ignoring a tang in her tone. "The society of the great goes to my head. But if I were a belted earl—he is belted, I hope? I don't know what it means, but I enjoy the sound of it—anyway, if I were one, I shouldn't exert myself to be agreeable or clever. What would be the use? If he were duller than a Presidential message, a lord's a lord for a' that. May I have another cup of tea, Miss Carter?"

"That dance of ours next month," she said, as she dropped the sugar into his cup—"I think I shall announce it then."

"Oh, are you really here?"

"I was unavoidably detained. May I have this dance, princess?"

"It was promised hours ago."

"Pardon, I didn't ask that. I asked if I might have it."

Something of his sunny effrontery was reflected in her own face, which had been but coldly turned to him.

"If you can take me away before Mr. Herrick sees——"

"Princess, I'm in horse-leech mood to-night," he told her, as they danced down the room. "Now I beg one minute with you, alone. Just one minute, to shake hands and say good-bye."

"Good-bye?"

"Won't you wish me a fortunate journey? Wasn't that what they used to say as the victim was lowered into the oubliette? I'm going to disappear, princess, drop out, cease to be. Just give me one moment to say my good-bye?"

"But I don't understand you! Well, here."

They waltzed through the conservatory door, and passed between Mr. Carter's orchids into the little fern-house beyond. Gay wiped the moisture from a pane of glass, and looked out into the street.

"All the carriages in New York. Your father's got a detective on the

grass-plot, watching for crooks. . . . How I shall remember this damp, warm smell."

"Oh, I don't understand you!" Mary cried again. "I don't believe you're human!"

"Princess," he was beginning, when she cut him short. It was the first time, he noted, while he was following the sense of her words with painful intentness, the first time he had ever heard her speak rapidly. That leisurely enunciation was so a part of her that it was hard to recognize this as Mary's speech.

"What are you?" she cried. "You frighten me! You're like a faun—an apparition. You come out of space, a stranger to everybody—no kin, no roots. You're always smiling and happy—no cares, no anxieties, no longings. We're all groaning under the harrow—every one of us but you. You've escaped the curse of Adam. And now you go, silent, unexplained as you came! I don't understand. I'm frightened. What are you?"

"I think," he said, with a deep breath, "I must say good-bye."

He was at the door, when the girl seized his wrist.

"You sha'n't go without a word! You sha'n't play with me!"

His face turned gray.

"Play with you!" At last he was meeting her eyes full soberly.

She insisted. "What are you?"

He slipped his hand from hers, and stepped back a pace, facing her squarely.

"I'm a thief!"

Her eyes looked a wild question.

"I ought not to have come here tonight. I ought to have dropped out without a word. But the flesh is weak. Now you must be told."

He closed the door leading to the larger conservatory. He noticed how the wet fern-fronds shone in the electric light, and thought again of the sweet, moist smell.

"I let you imagine my father a glue-king. He isn't; he's a superintendent in a factory, on thirty dollars a week. There are seven of us chil-

dren. Three are married, four live at home. We that live at home pay our board. They're a good sort of people, I suppose—I don't like any of them.

"I went through the high-school; then I was made errand-boy in the bank. I've been there ten years. I'm teller now. I was always a good boy, a cheerful worker. It seemed the chief—in fact, the only—end of man, to go to work as soon as he left school, to do his best for his employers, and help his family along. They put me on the rails, and gave me a little shove, and on I went, year after year, as smoothly as you please. I don't think I was unhappy. I didn't realize that there was anything different in the world—till I saw you.

"Of course, I knew there were rich people who led a life other than mine, but that was of no more concern to me than the habits of the Hindus. My sisters used to read in the papers about Mrs. Such-a-one's ball, but it didn't lessen their enjoyment of the oyster social. I was watching the guests going into the dance that night, just as one watches a scene on the stage. One hasn't any idea of climbing over the footlights and taking part. Then I saw you. And the whole big, painted pageant became real, and I knew what I was missing.

"I had never been happy in my life, princess, but my senses were too numb to know it. I had never felt a moment's joy—I didn't know there was such a thing as joy. Beauty didn't exist for me. Music, flowers, lights, food and wine, pretty women, soft carpets, all the ease and brightness of living—I'd never tasted them, I'd never known such things were. Then I saw your face, and it meant all that. 'The glory that was Greece and the grandeur that was Rome.' D'you see?"

He had begun with a chastened air, proper to the confessional; but, as his story flowed, it moved him in the telling as it had moved him in the acting. His voice rang out with a gay defiance; he had anything but a penitent's mien.

"From that instant, I set myself to reach you—to be in your life. They gave me leave to go abroad. I might have managed second-cabin and third-rate lodging-houses, but, oh, Claridge's! I've paid my scot since I've mixed with the fabulously rich. I've helped myself out of the bank vaults. No, I haven't ruined the widow and the orphan; the directors will have to make up the loss out of their own pockets. Old Pharisees who sat patting their fat paunches and voting against granting me a 'raise' of five dollars at the end of my tenth year with the bank! They may have to go without entrées for a while—do 'em good.

"I've worked it rather well. Tomorrow's newspapers, commenting on the perverseness and short-sightedness of criminals, will observe that my ability, if directed in the channels of honesty, would have made me a bank-president. Rot! In the first place, it wouldn't; the man on a salary stays in the rut, grinding his life out, and seeing the director's stupid nephew pass him. And, if I ever did, by a lucky miracle, lift myself to business success, what am I? A worn-out, sleepless, middle-aged dyspeptic, reaching life's pleasures when he's too jaded to care—taking his first holiday when you're a grandmother! What's that against my crowded hour? I've got to pay for it, but, great God, it was worth it!

"I've covered my tracks carefully, princess. Nobody has breathed suspicion. I'm such a good young man! But to-morrow the semi-annual accounting comes, and to-night I slip on a steamer for South America. My name across the river is something very different from Peregrine Gay—that happy wanderer from the straight and narrow path. No one will ever connect your acquaintance with that

bank. The Carters will not figure as an adventurer's dupe. I've hurt nobody, and—my God, the fun I've had!"

The girl was still silent, motionless. He caught breath for his peroration.

"I was sorry when you made me tell you—sorry, not because I have any pride, but lest you feel yourself smirched that you've broken bread with a thief. But after all, I'm glad you know, because you might have thought me—human—and been—a little—sorry when I dropped out. And I don't want to bring you the faintest shadow of a grief. Now you'll be glad never to think of me again. But—though I'm a felon, princess, don't grudge me my great happiness! You've given me a royal year, just by existing. Let me thank you for being what you are—and go."

"Wait!" The voice was once more low, deliberate, sweet, Mary's own voice. "Kiss me, dear, before you go."

His face showed a wild fear.

"Mary! . . . My God—I said nobody was hurt! But if you suffer—oh, God, don't step out of the picture! You were an ideal, a dream, a star in the sky, nothing my miserable escapades could touch! Oh, princess, don't—care!"

For a moment their eyes held each other. Then, in one quick rush Peregrine kissed the girl's fingers, and dropped from the window.

He fell almost on the plain-clothesman. There was a grapple, a struggle, a shot.

"He grabbed for my pistol-pocket, sergeant, and me for his hand, and between us the damn gun went off. He looked up at me—I seen his face in the light from the window above—and he says, smiling-like: 'The force can always be depended on. Thank you, officer.'"



THE LITERATI

(WITH APOLOGIES TO MAETERLINCK)

By Theodosia Garrison

Seven Authors.
Three Poetesses.
A Wife.

One Husband—in evening dress.

A DRAWING-ROOM lighted with tall candles that cast a flickering, sickly light. The characters wander vaguely about the room, or stand in small groups. There is an incessant babble of conversation, in which the names of various magazines are constantly repeated. In the farthest corner of the room, THE HUSBAND is crouching behind a screen which partially conceals him. He is pallid, and wears the look of a hunted animal in hiding.

THE HUSBAND—Oh, oh! I have been here for three hours, and not one has gone yet. And they are still talking! If I could only understand, it would not be so terrible, but they speak a strange language. I have not seen my Wife for a long time. There is an Aztec playing the piano. I do not know what he is playing, but I am sure it is something terrible. That is what one gets for having a piano.

A POETESS—Oh, will no one listen to me? The Seven Authors are all speaking at once, and not one will listen to me? One would think they were all editors. Where is The Husband? Some one said there was a husband here. He would have to listen—that is what one marries for.

SECOND POETESS—Yes, yes, let us find him. I shall say a little sonnet to him that I wrote only this morning. When I have finished, he will be sur-

prised to find it is only fourteen lines long. He will have thought it much longer.

THIRD POETESS—Yes, yes, let us find him!

(They peer about the corners of the room.)

THE HUSBAND—The Seven Authors are still talking, but it is apparent that none believes the others to be speaking the truth. They are all telling strange stories of cheques they receive daily. I cannot understand why each repeats so many times that he has never had a manuscript rejected. They seem never to grow tired of saying it. One of them has his picture in a newspaper. He is showing it to everybody! One would think he was proud of having taken a patent medicine.

A POETESS—The Husband is there! Look, look! He is there in the corner!

THE HUSBAND—Oh, oh! they are coming! The Three Poetesses have seen me, and they are coming! Oh, how terrible they are! One would think, to see them, that he was looking into three convex mirrors. The Poetess with the ox-chain will get here first! She writes purple verse for pale people, and she is wearing a kimono! Oh, oh! One would think she was a comic opera. She is as terrible as a comic opera! Oh, oh, she is going to sit beside me!

THE POETESS—Why are you hiding here? No one can find you. One would think you were the North Pole. Do not look so wild. No one is going to hurt you. Listen, and I will tell you who all the people are, and what they have written.

THE HUSBAND—No, no! that is not necessary. They have already done that themselves—a great many times. Where is my Wife? She had no right to leave me here alone! I am beginning to hate her, and I do not dare leave this place to find her. Some one might ask me about the “oversoul,” and I do not know whether it is something to wear or not. Where is my Wife?

THE POETESS—Hush, do not shake so! One would think you were the Flatiron Building. Your Wife is talking to the Author by the punch-bowl. He pays no attention to her, whatever. He has been by the punch-bowl a long time. See how he stares into its depths. One would say he saw strange things there.

THE HUSBAND—If he does not leave it, he will see stranger things before morning. Oh, oh, what is going to happen now! Why is that woman standing on the divan? She is wearing an Alpine hat trimmed with little glass beads, and she has forgotten to take off her rubbers! Oh, oh, I know she is a genius. Oh, I am sure something terrible is going to happen!

THE POETESS—You are quite right—she is going to recite. No, no! Do not try to crawl under the table. One would think you were a dachshund. Listen! She is telling when she wrote this poem; she is telling why; she is telling on what paper she wrote it; she is telling the color of the ink. She is very wonderful! She writes only of the dead. She says her poem is about a little, burned child—

THE HUSBAND—Oh, I am not happy! I am not happy! Tell me, is there a window behind us here?

THE POETESS—Yes, yes! why should you ask such a thing?

THE HUSBAND—Oh, see! the Seven Authors are all talking again. They are speaking of money. They are telling what prices they receive. It is very strange that the one who speaks last always appears to receive the most! Oh, oh, they are putting out the candles! Why do they do that? One was unhappy enough, as it was!

THE POETESS—Hush! she is ready now to recite. She has taken off both her rubbers. She recites only in the dark. It is difficult for people to find their way out in the dark. What is the matter? Why do you groan like that? One would think you were a radiator on a Winter's morning. Listen! She is speaking of a moon—of a mildewed moon—

THE HUSBAND—Oh, oh, oh! I can stand it no longer—and my Wife will not go home! She will never be ready to go home. Oh, oh, the Poetess has finished. She is looking at me. Oh, oh, she is going to ask me what I think of her poem! If she were a man, I should not hesitate to tell her. Oh, I am afraid—I am terribly afraid! What is going to happen now?

THE POETESS—What is the matter? Why are your teeth chattering? One would think you wished to bite the piano. Listen, and I will say a little sonnet to you. I have written it myself, and sometimes I think I know what it is about. Oh, oh, oh, what are you doing? You are breaking the window! Oh, oh, he has climbed over the sill! He is reaching the fire-escape! Oh, he is jumping from one round to another! He is swinging by his hands! Oh, oh! it is like looking into the monkey-house!

A POETESS—What is it? What is the matter? Light the candles! One can never tell. Perhaps the refreshments are being passed!

THE POETESS—Oh, oh, who will listen to me now? The Husband has gone, and something tells me that he does not intend to come back. Oh, see, see! he is running down the street and screaming. Oh, he has leaped into the house on the corner—the house with the swinging-doors that do not touch the floor! One would think he was after something. Oh, oh, what is to be done now? The Purple Poetess has lost both her rubbers; the Seven Authors have drunk all the punch, and The Husband is gone! My God, my God, who will listen to me now!

CURTAIN.

THE "CHOW" COTERIE

By Lefa Field Hubbell

WHILE he was still at West Point, racking his brain in a languid endeavor to cram all the military knowledge possible into its limited capacity—for Wentworth was no prodigy—the thought of fighting fanatical Filipinos and living on fish and rice rather appealed to him. It smacked of adventure and privation, two things he had never known. But, when he got his commission, and rushed off to the Philippines, with saber drawn in righteous indignation, and settled down to the massacre of mosquitos and crocodiles and the annihilation of cholera and dengue fever, it did not strike him as being especially heroic.

There are degrees of heroism, of course—he admitted that; just as there are degrees of heat and cold, of sickness and of love. But he found that the heroism that exists in patient endeavor to pass away time is more of a tragedy than that born of the bugle-call to arms. Still, Wentworth had never considered himself a hero; he did not wish to be one. He wished nothing so much as to be a good soldier—when he left West Point. He scoffed at the ideal life of the "society man." For him there was war; there was his country's honor to uphold, and there were his country's enemies to fight. How vastly more glorious it would be to "hike" through impassable swamps, waist-deep in the quagmire of stagnant jungle-sloughs, than to dance like an idiot to the rhythmic strains of a string orchestra!

But "hiking" turned out to be anything but what he thought it would be, and he considered the gallant pursuit

of the enemy anything but glorifying. To be stretched out on the ground, a lodestone for every creeping thing that crawls, with his teeth chattering in chorus with the monkeys in the forest, while his temperature registered 104 degrees—and no government ice-plant within fifty miles—somehow did not very forcibly appeal to him just at the time as being particularly heroic. At least, he reflected, his friends back in the States would not think so. Oh, the glorious States! If he could only be back there again!

Wentworth loved babies and flowers and music and—girls. If he could only see one dear little American baby's face, and smell a violet, and feast his eyes on the matchless beauty of an American girl! The gorgeous, unscented blossoms of the tropics did not take his fancy, and he was simply sickened with the sight of dirty *buyo*-chewing, black-toothed, semi-savage Moros. He hardly dared remember how long it had been since he had seen any of the things he so craved just then. As a matter of fact, it was something over two years.

"Captain," he said, one day, to Captain Chalmers, when they had returned to the small, one-company post, after a long, fruitless tramp in pursuit of some Ma-Ranao Moros, "I think I'll quit the army."

The captain stared with wide-open eyes.

"Quit it!" he exclaimed. "Why, man, what are you talking about?"

"I was never cut out for a soldier," the lieutenant replied, irritably. "It is all very well to 'bone up,' and get through the Point with a commission

and a license to fight, and all that; but when a man hikes and hikes and hikes, and spends weeks on a trail without getting a Moro within range of his gun—why, there is no fun in that.”

“Oh,” the captain returned, with less sullenness than usual, but with the same leer in the corner of his mouth; “it is fun you are looking for, is it?”

“Yes, anything,” the younger man replied. “But I could get along without the fun, if I could get a little excitement now and then, with some glory in it.”

The captain gasped. What did the young fool call excitement? Didn't he call it exciting when he was lying on his back in the depths of the forest, surrounded by Moros on every side who were frantic with fanatical fervor to be at them; when the jungle air was so tense with danger that the snapping of a twig set hearts to beating furiously that had been stanch and fearless in many face-to-face encounters with the enemy? If he didn't call that exciting, what was it? That was as much excitement as *he* ever cared to have, and he was no novice on the battle-ground.

He looked the lieutenant over, and the lieutenant looked him over; then each scrutinized the other's face. The captain saw a boyish countenance which was aglow with the ambition of the impetuous youth who has not yet added a silver bar to the plain shoulder-straps that adorned his shoulders, but to whom a dozen silver bars—or iron bars, either—could offer but little resistance, if he set his mind and heart on finally attaining a star or two. He was a handsome fellow, but not much more than a boy, after all, the captain reflected, contemptuously.

The lieutenant saw a dark-visaged, coarse-looking, tall man, who appeared even larger in his khaki uniform than he would in any other attire. At a glance, one could tell that the captain was the epitome of selfishness and greed, and that he was the kind of man who sneered at others' capabilities or ambitions. He was bitter against everything and anything that

did not conduce directly to his advancement, and no one had ever heard him compliment any animate or inanimate thing. He prided himself on a great contempt for women; why, no one knew, though it was supposed that he had been disappointed in some love-affair. He disliked everything with a displeasure which was caused by a failure to understand, or an inability to see, any good or any beauty in anything that lives—except food. To him, all harmony was discord; all life, a dirge. The breath of a rose was noxious, and the face of a child was full of deceit and sorrow.

Lieutenant Wentworth lived with the captain because there was no place else to live, except with the doctor; but the doctor's house was very small and had not the conveniences of the captain's. Usually, when two men live together and isolate themselves from the body of moving humanity about them, they lose their individualities, and each borrows something from the other; each is governed as much by his companion's code of ethics as by his own, and his principles unconsciously adjust themselves to his friend's. But it was not so with Captain Chalmers and Lieutenant Wentworth. Each retained his personality, his own code of morals, his characteristic manner of speech and gesture. Wentworth tolerated the captain because the captain was his superior officer, and he had to. The captain tolerated the lieutenant also because he had to, though he had a personal resentment against the younger man for having come from West Point and from a military family; whereas he himself had been commissioned from civil life.

“What could you do if you left the army?” the captain said, patronizingly. “You can't do anything else, can you? The Point is all right for a military career, but it doesn't give one a very generous qualification for a civil life. What could you do?”

“Oh, rot!” the lieutenant said, airily. “A Wentworth doesn't have

to be trained to do things—he pitches in and does them."

"But he doesn't think hiking is worth his while?" the captain sneered.

"Not when he can't get what he is after. Not when he gets dengue, and malaria, and cholera, when he does start out to do something that is worth while." He stopped, abruptly, and listened. "What's that?" he asked, waiting for a repetition of the sound; "it must be a boat in. Wasn't that a whistle?"

"Sounded like it," the captain returned, shortly. "I believe the *Seward* is due, with mail." He picked up a paper—dated three months earlier!—and began to read about the "recent" political squabble in his old home.

Lieutenant Wentworth leaned back on his squeaking army cot, and yawned, with his hands locked under his head.

"Well, I might as well get down and see if there is any mail," he said, after half an hour of gazing at the *salangi* ceiling of the little *nipa* shack; and he sat up, listlessly, and cast a casual glance through the window down the long, narrow street that led to the sea.

"Great Scott!" he exclaimed, springing to his feet with military swiftness, and riveting his gaze upon some object far down the street. "Captain, there is a—a woman!"

"A what?" the captain asked, without looking up. It was impossible to surprise him; there simply was not a grain of surprise in him.

"An American woman!" the lieutenant cried, incredulously. "If it isn't, I'll eat my hat."

"Pish, man! you are dreaming!" Still, he did not glance up.

Wentworth kept on staring, while the "American woman" came slowly up the street, looking with interest at the dirty naked little Moro children as they squatted on their haunches and played *dukkos*, and smiling at their curious scrutiny as they surveyed her clothes, her steel-bead *châtelaine*, her dainty, white-shod feet. She was, undeniably, an American woman—a girl, Wentworth saw, upon closer inspec-

tion, and an exceptionally attractive one. But, if she had been the personification of all that was ugly and repulsive, he would have thought her pretty at that moment.

"Think of going back to the States," he soliloquized, "and seeing the streets full of—crowded—with those things! It is a real, live American woman. Great heavens, captain!" he blurted out, unable to control his emotions any longer, "come here and see this! Do you come from a country where such women live, and not care a rap whether you ever see one again, or not? Are you dead?" He turned around, and glared at him.

The captain pretended not to be curious, but, as Wentworth turned quickly, he caught the captain's eyes leveled down the street.

"I'm off," Wentworth exclaimed, snatching his khaki coat and campaign hat from a reed stool beside the cot, and dashing out of the house. He rushed out of the back door, made a circuit of a small cluster of native buildings and some banana-trees, and met her face to face.

In the Philippines, all Americans are kindred. She stopped him.

"Can you tell me where I can find the commanding officer?" she asked, in a sweet, girlish voice.

Wentworth nearly fainted, but he managed to reply, through his confusion: "I can take you to him;" and he wondered what the captain would say, and what she wanted of him.

"I have a letter to him," she explained, "from Major Hough, of the —th Cavalry, in whose post in Luzon I have been stationed for the past year, in the educational department. Major Hough told me he would help me to get located."

"Great heavens!" the lieutenant exclaimed, unable to restrain himself, "did they send you down here to teach school?"

"Yes," she answered, quietly; "why not?"

"Doesn't the department at Manila know that this is no place for a young

girl to be alone? Besides, the Moros of this section won't need to be taught things for years, except with Mausers and service guns."

"I suppose not," she replied, simply, as they walked together toward the captain's house. "They ordered me here to teach, so I suppose I'll have to. There seem to be plenty of children here."

"Yes, but I am afraid you will find them almost beyond repair; they are incorrigible little imps. We have been trying to civilize their fathers for two years, and have succeeded only in intimidating them. You might try to teach them the higher mathematics of making two races one, since they have become our 'little brown brothers,' as the papers back home refer to them. I wish they could see them."

"It would be interesting, wouldn't it?" she agreed, laughing deliciously. "But I think the first thing for me to do is to find some place to stay. I rather expected to be able to get accommodations at the *presidente's*, but I don't seem to be able to find him. I couldn't make these people understand either Spanish or Tagalog."

Wentworth laughed, boyishly, and said: "I have lived here two years, and have never yet heard of the town's having a *presidente*. It is Moro, you know, and supposedly under the dominion of Datto Amaru; that is, the Moro part of it—we have martial law."

"Oh!" she said, helplessly, and her brow contracted with adorable perplexity. She stopped, and looked down the street. "What is that big building over there? It seems to be large enough to have all kinds of rooms in it."

"That is the company's barracks."

"And the one across the way?"

"The commissary and quartermaster's stores."

"Well, what is that blue-and-white building—the real one, I mean, with the board sides and *nipa* roof?"

"That is the military headquarters and telegraph office."

She was thoughtful for a moment.

Wentworth was so fascinated with her fresh young face and mellow voice that he was all impatience for her to speak again. She glanced up and caught his eye, and laughed.

"I am quite a monstrosity, am I not?" she asked, amused.

Wentworth had the sense to apologize and the grace to blush. Yes, he actually blushed, but she did not see that. Presently, she suggested:

"Couldn't I borrow a tent? Perhaps your quartermaster would let me have one."

"A tent! With the Moros shooting into camp every night? Hardly. But wait a minute," he added, quickly, with a characteristic gesture of detention. "I know of a place, if you do not mind living alone; of course, it would be infinitely better than living with Filipinos and Moros. The house is near the officers' quarters—that is, the officers' tents—so you would not need to be afraid of belligerent natives."

"Oh, as for that," she assured him, "I should not be afraid. Indeed, I doubt if the Moros are worse than the Igorrotes, or the Negritos, or other tribes of Luzon. But do you think you can get the place? Is there no one living in it? And if there is not, and it is a decent place, why aren't officers living in it instead of in tents?"

"Oh—why—well, they have been, you know, but there are only three of us; and—I'll take you over there to that seat in the plaza; and, if you don't mind waiting there for me, I can go and see if the place is for rent," he ended, lamely.

"You might tell me where the commanding officer lives, or take me to him, and I could wait for you there."

"Afterward will do for that. We'd better see about the house first."

"Why cannot I go with you to the house, and see the people myself?" she queried.

"No," Wentworth insisted. "I may have to run all over the place to find people. It will be better for you to wait there."

Grace let him take her to the long,

bamboo seat, where she sat down dutifully, and waited.

Wentworth made a Chesterfieldian bow, and dashed off—around the little cluster of native shacks and the little clump of banana-trees. The circuit brought him again at his and Captain Chalmers's quarters.

"Captain," he announced, breathlessly, "we've got to move."

"Move!" the captain echoed, wondering if the man had gone mad. "What is the matter with you?—has she turned your head?"

"We've got to move, I tell you!" he repeated—to his superior officer. "That girl hasn't any place to go. There isn't any place in town to take her to, except off the reservation, down in the native quarter; and it is too dangerous there. She has got to have some place to go to."

"Give her a tent," the captain said, brutally. "Who is she, anyway? What does she want down here?"

"She belongs to the educational department——"

"Why didn't they keep her? I didn't send for any educational department people; and I'm running this post."

"Well, they have sent her here, and she is here. Besides, she has a letter to you."

"Asking me to move out, I suppose, and turn my quarters over to her?" he snarled, with a disagreeable curl of the lips.

"I don't think so," the lieutenant replied, with trenchant irritation. "I did not see it, but she told me she had. Look here, captain, we are two men, you and I. Great Scott, man, haven't you any chivalry in your heart? Would you let a young girl like that live in a tent, or have to go among the Moros to seek refuge?" He shuddered, careless of the captain's rank or any consequences that might arise from his words; he would have braved a court-martial gladly.

"Why should I give up my house to a woman? She hasn't any right to be here if she is not willing to put up with conditions as she finds them.

She wouldn't be the only school-teacher in the Philippines who is living in a tent, and glad to get it, too. She is probably one of those timid little things we read about, and will give us more trouble than all the Moros in the island put together."

"I'll ask the *medico*," Wentworth said to himself, hotly; "he is a gentleman, anyway. He hasn't anything like such a decent house, but he'd give it up if he was on his death-bed." And he rushed from the captain's presence with frowning brows and darkly vengeful thoughts.

The *medico* was so taken by surprise at the news of the late arrival, that he stopped blowing clouds of smoke at his bob-tailed pet lizard, and nearly choked in an endeavor to swallow a mouthful of the smoke. Give up his house to her? Why, he would give up his life, his—his— There was nothing he could think of he would not give up to her, or any other woman. In a moment's time he was stuffing his belongings into a box, and ordering his *muchacho* to take them away some place.

"*Donde?*" the *muchacho* wailed, in the excitement.

"Oh, any place," the doctor told him. "Dump them out on the corner; I'll attend to that, later."

He mopped his face with a grimy handkerchief, pulled on his coat, slapped his hat on his head, and evacuated the premises—by way of the back door; it would never do to let her see him in those soiled and wilted clothes.

Wentworth rushed back to Miss Griffith.

"I succeeded in getting the place," he told her.

Grace looked up. She had been intent upon watching an army of little red ants manœuvre around a vanquished enemy and carry him off piecemeal.

"You did?" she asked, with a peculiar inflection. "Yes, I thought you would. I watched you; you went around there"—she indicated the little cluster of trees and native buildings—"and came back presently to that house over there, on this side. You

stayed there a few minutes; then you went to the house next door. I saw you hurrying about and moving your things out. Now, that is not fair, and I won't have the place if I have to deprive you of it."

Wentworth opened his eyes in innocent surprise and denial, as though the thought had never occurred to him.

"No," he said, reassuringly; "we had some quartermaster things stored in there; I never lived in the house in my life."

She rose, and they went together down the street.

Heavens! he had not thought of it before—what under the sun would the girl get to eat, and where, and how? He would not dare ask her into the officers' mess. It was really the captain's mess, and he and the doctor had been asked to join it only because there was no other cook to be had in the town. The captain was using a "striker" from the company, and Wentworth knew that the captain would never consent to have the girl in his mess, anyway. Cold perspiration oozed out of his forehead, and fell in great, brown spots on his khaki coat.

"About your things, and lunch—" he ventured. "I can have my *muchacho* bring your stuff up from the wharf, and——"

"Thank you so much; but I brought a boy with me. He is down on the wharf, guarding my things. I have a ship-load, almost." She laughed at the thought of her piles of boxes. "And as for the *chow*, why, don't bother about that. I can rake up a little tiffin in no time. I never think of going any place without my chafing-dish, and I brought enough canned things from Manila to last me six months or more. I have cases and cases of them. I was warned about the place, you see."

Wentworth heaved a sigh of relief; but he felt a queer little griping pain in his stomach, and his mouth watered at the mere mention of a chafing-dish. He wondered if he should ever be invited to partake of some of her chafing-

dish tiffins. Just the thought of it made him hungry.

He left her in the little, two-roomed *nipa* house, which was set high up off the ground, on bamboo stilts, and she soon became lost in plans of arrangement for her things; where she should put her Igorrote shields, her Negrito knives, her Tinguian idols, and where certain *petates* would be most effective and certain tables most convenient.

Grace was of that type of American girl which attracts every one, the influence of whose personality flows around her like a peaceful sea rippling in the sunshine. Yet she was not beautiful, except in the *ensemble* of dark-violet eyes, black lashes, auburn hair, and two dimples which were the will-o'-the-wisps of her smiles. And the way she carried herself—so gracefully, so Gibson-like—would attract the least esthetic observer.

If the lieutenant and the doctor had been lonely before Grace came, they were "making up" for it now. They were like two children vying with each other for attention from a much-admired, but of course unattainable, personage. On her centre-table would be a bunch of scarlet hibiscus from one, and on her little dining-table a pot of ferns or a jar of ylang-ylang blossoms from the other. But she showed no preference for either of them, and neither of them seemed to expect that she should. She adored them both, with the big, tender, sincere heart of gold of a girl who has always had somebody to love and care for. She took the kindest interest in everything they did, and brought happiness into their lives as naturally and unaffectedly as the sun brings light into darkness. Her school-hours were short, and after they were over, the rest of the day was monopolized by the two officers. These hours were golden, glorious, and the little reed chairs beneath the canopy of cocoa-palms in front of her house were the favorite resort of the trio. The evenings were no longer endless and tiresome, but splendid—full of games and merry voices, reading sometimes, and always

chattering. On Sundays they would take long walks out into the forest between the post and the first outpost, and return with their arms laden with wonderful orchids and rare ferns.

Captain Chalmers refused point-blank to call on the school-teacher. He held himself most painfully aloof from what he called "the gang of idiots." He never dreamed that the day would soon be upon him when he would wish he were one of the "idiots."

It was just at this time that, like a vapor of poisonous gas that consumes all in its path, cholera came to the post, and the school had to be closed. The first day, only one person died—a Moro fisherman. The next day there were seven deaths; the next, twenty; and so it kept on increasing from day to day, until the death rate was alarming. The dreadful disease decimated the native village, and it was hard to find a Moro dwelling that was not adorned with a little yellow flag which flapped warningly in the breeze.

The soldiers were quarantined in their barracks, and a rigid guard placed over them. The streets were deserted, except for a few native mongrel dogs that went about with scared, starved faces and sluggish steps; even the chattering of the monkeys was stilled. The Moros wore *anting-anting* charms, and sent little boats bedecked with bright-colored banners and a profusion of flowers and prayers—Arabic scrawls on slips of paper—to float out to sea with the tide.

Those were terrible days, when every drop of water used was doubly distilled by the Government ice-plant, and every mouthful of food eaten was taken from hermetically sealed cans; when any person seen having communication with the natives was clapped in the guard-house; when people drank listerine, and put mysterious drops of liquid in everything they ate, and wiped their lips often with a handkerchief saturated with a disinfectant; when they boiled even their bathing-water, and put quantities of carbolic acid in the water their floors were wiped up with; when serv-

ants were watched like criminals, and it was as much as one of their lives was worth to leave his master's premises.

One day the inevitable happened—cholera among the soldiers. A handsome young Kansan was seized with the malady, and in two hours they were lowering his flag-draped body in the ground, and pouring quick-lime over it. The next day, Captain Chalmers's "striker" was preparing breakfast, when he gave a cry of intense agony, and lurched forward across the table. He was taken to the improvised hospital—and, what was of even greater importance to the captain, breakfast was left uncooked.

However, Lieutenant Wentworth went out and mixed something together which he christened "pancakes," and brewed something which he declared was coffee; so the captain and the doctor managed to get along, although the doctor had too keen an eye for consequences to touch the "pancakes."

They went without luncheon. There was almost nothing in the post to be had, indeed. No Moro was allowed to come into the town from the outside with chickens or eggs or *commotes*, and what few there were inside could not feed themselves, much less part with any of their food to the military. No supply boat had been near the place for a month, and would not be for at least two weeks longer, and the commissary was divested of everything except dried beans and some bacon and several cases of evaporated cream. The officers had been living on field rations for days, unable to get anything else. They couldn't have fish, because fish are the most dangerous things to eat—fish and fresh vegetables and fruit—during an epidemic of cholera. Plainly, there was nothing to do but eat beans and drink milk, or sit down and calmly starve.

Captain Chalmers stormed and tore his hair, for if he had any passion at all it was for good food. Going without his luncheon did not put him in any too good humor, but the worst of

it was, there were absolutely no prospects whatever of getting any dinner or anything else. Of course, there was flour in the commissary, and there were sugar and coffee and plenty of hard-tack and salt; but these might have been so many stones, so far as the captain was concerned.

He waited and waited, thinking that when the lieutenant and the doctor turned up they would certainly scrape something eatable together which would at least lessen his pangs of hunger. And then, upon becoming too impatient to wait longer, he went to the window, and looked across into his neighbor's, and saw the merry trio that sat around a little table, whereon a chafing-dish, with something creamy and smooth and steaming, and a platter of crisp brown toast, and some fried—fried—what was it? Why, it looked like fried oysters! And to one side, as though it had been set apart for another course, were a jar of the most tempting jam and a delicious layer-cake!

He gulped down something almost like a sob of hungry longing, and went into his poor, frugal kitchen. He found a half of a can of sardines and a tin box of commissary hard-tack which the ants had taken by assault. It was maddening. He simply had not the courage to go back into that other room and look across at the festive board. He took a book out into the kitchen, and sat down deliberately to ignore "the gang of idiots." "Of course," he said, furiously, to himself, "they are just having a good laugh at me, the fools."

When two of the "fools" came home that night—the doctor was sharing Wentworth's room now—they expressed their sympathy for the captain, and proceeded to elaborate upon the abundance and excellence of their fare. The captain gnashed his teeth, arose, gave a vicious kick at his chair, and left the room, slamming the frail door behind him so fiercely that there was danger of demolishing it.

The next morning, he went out into the kitchen early, hunger having kept

him from sleeping until his usual hour in the morning. The stove was guiltless of any intention of heated animation, and the captain waited with ill-concealed impatience for his brother officers to get up and commence operations.

The lieutenant came strolling out, in his kimono, about seven o'clock, and proceeded to take his matutinal shower-bath, in the little *nipa*-screened room just off the kitchen. When he had finished, the doctor followed suit. The captain waited.

The lieutenant was dressed first—as immaculate and contented as a Sybarite. He did not look very much as if he had any intention of pitching in and making coffee and cooking "pancakes," the captain reflected, on the point of asking him for instructions to do it himself. Perhaps the lieutenant was waiting for the doctor to do it; he had done it the day before, so it was only fair that the doctor should do it that morning. Presently, the doctor came out, as spick and span and crisply clean as the lieutenant. They both picked up their white caps, and started for the door, when Captain Chalmers gasped:

"You are not going out without a cup of coffee?"

"We are boarding with Miss Griffith during the cholera," Wentworth explained, nonchalantly, and added, tantalizingly: "She promised us some hot rolls and some fat, juicy sausages with our coffee this morning. I never ate anything like the dinner she gave us last night." And they went out, laughing.

The captain's face was positively black, and he sputtered something about their "thinking they were smart," and crushed a newspaper fiercely in his hand, preparatory to starting a fire in the kitchen stove. He filled the little hopper of the coffee-mill full of grains of the berry, and sat down, like a child, with the mill between his great knees, and turned the crank with a hand trembling with resentment and weak from hunger. He threw the ground coffee into the pot,

covered it with water, removed the stove lid, and placed the pot on the coals; he was too hungry to wait for the stove to get hot. Then he took the ant-eaten hard-tack, and spread it out in the sun in the window, and, when the ants were all gone, threw two or three pieces in the oven to "freshen it up." When his coffee became warm, he poured it out into an enameled tin cup, broke some of the hard-tack into it, and tried to make a breakfast of it. It was really a brave thing to do.

Then he thought, and after he had thought for a while he went over to the company's barracks, and asked for a man who would volunteer to cook for him. No one responded; no one knew how to cook.

Frantic, he went back to his home, and waited for the two "fools." Neither of them came in until time to wash for tiffin. Wentworth came sauntering in first.

"Wentworth," the captain said, "where did that girl get all her *chow*?" He was O. D. that day, and with his khaki clothes and campaign hat he looked so big and strong and masterful that it was difficult to realize the poor man was actually hungry.

"Cooked it herself," Wentworth answered, laconically.

"But where did she get the—the sausages—and the jam and the—oysters?"

"Brought them with her," the lieutenant replied. So the captain *had* been peeping!

"How much has she got on hand?" the captain asked, presently.

"Oh, lots. She's got a corner in *chow* in this post."

"You don't think she'd care to—to sell some of it, do you?"

"No, indeed; she has already given the doctor a quantity of delicacies for the hospital. She wouldn't care to dispose of any more."

"But what am I going to do?" the captain blurted out, in desperation. "Why, I'm nearly starved, Wentworth!"

Wentworth was cruel, of course; but he grinned, and said: "You haven't

any right to be in the army, captain, if you are not willing to put up with the conditions as you find them, and take what you can get. I believe that is the comment you made when I proposed giving her your house. Besides, I wouldn't ask her to run the risk of getting out of *chow* herself, though there doesn't seem to be much danger of it now; we certainly live well."

"You wouldn't ask her," the captain flung back at him. "You don't have to; I'll see her myself—she wouldn't begrudge the commanding officer something to eat."

"Oh, no, she wouldn't begrudge you anything; but, you see, though you may be commanding officer of the post, she happens to have promised me I might be commanding officer in her house for the rest of my life; and I think you have treated her too shabbily to deserve anything to eat, myself. However——"

The captain was furious. "She can keep her trash *chow*," he said, his eyes fairly blazing with wrath, and he glared at the lieutenant; "and you can just tell her I said so, too. Do you hear? I wouldn't eat a mouthful of anything she has in her house, or ever *did* have in her house, or ever *will* have in her house, if I was starving—actually starving!" He paced the floor, and stopped short, whirling on his heel, as some one knocked at the door. "Come in," he cried. "What do you want? *Cosa?*"

Grace's *muchacho* stood in the door, carrying a tray. The tray was covered with a daintily embroidered linen cloth, and on the cloth were several dainty china dishes. One of the dishes contained a beautiful—so the captain thought it—piece of brown toast heaped high with delicious creamed oysters; another contained a dozen stalks of snow-white asparagus dipped in mayonnaise; and still another was filled with native *commotes*, mashed and whipped to a light, creamy substance, and surmounted by a small piece of butter which was melting and running down the sides in little streams. A generous quarter of a good-sized

pie—apple-pie, too; his favorite—reposed there peacefully, and from under the edge of the pie-plate protruded an envelope.

The captain's eyes stared greedily at the tray; then he snatched it from the boy's hands eagerly, hungrily, fiercely, and set it on the table. He tore open the note and read:

"Miss Griffith is sorry Captain Chalmers has been so unfortunate as to lose his cook, and that there is nothing in the post that he can get to eat. She fears that too much abstinence from proper nourishment will incapacitate him for the fulfilment of his duties, and begs that he will accept her humble offering, with her compliments. Also, should

he feel inclined, during the rest of the epidemic, or until he can make other arrangements, he is invited to join Miss Griffith's mess."

The captain collapsed into the chair before the table, and almost— But no, people back in the States who have read of Captain Chalmers's daring exploits and his more than heroic storming of one of the principal Moro forts on the Lake, would never believe it; they would not think it possible that he could come even near shedding tears of gratitude. But he did, while Wentworth chuckled to himself, and strolled out to tell the other "fools" about it.



ONE AND THE SAME THING

HE—Mr. Clubleigh seems to be at home in society.

SHE—I think he appears uncomfortable.

"That's what I mean."



ALL THAT WAS REQUIRED

THE WIFE—This is my new hat.

THE HUSBAND—I see. I don't like it.

—"You don't have to like it, dear. You only have to pay for it."



HERSELF TO BLAME

SHE—I wish you could forget that you married me for my money.

HE—You won't let me. Don't I have to ask you for money every time I need any?



TRULY REMARKABLE

MISS WITHERS—I have never forgotten my early training.

MISS PERTLEIGH—Marvelous! What a wonderful memory you have!